United Nations A/51/PV.47

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

47th plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 15 *(continued)*

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President: This morning, the General Assembly will proceed to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 1996.

The 18 outgoing members are: Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Pakistan, Paraguay, Portugal, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

I should like to remind members of the Assembly that, as of 1 January 1997, the following States will continue to be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Finland, Gabon, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The names of these 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States which will remain members of the Council after 1 January 1997, the 18 members should be elected as follows: five from African States, three from Asian States, one from Eastern European States, four from Latin American and Caribbean States, and five from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the number of candidates, not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed that for the five vacancies from among the African States, the candidates endorsed by the Group of African States are Cape Verde, Djibouti, the Gambia, Mozambique and Zambia.

96-86664 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

There are six candidates for the three vacancies from among the Asian States, namely Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam.

There are two candidates for one vacancy from among the Eastern European States. The candidates are Bulgaria and Latvia.

There are five candidates for four vacancies from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. The five candidates are Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico and Venezuela.

The Group of Western European and other States has endorsed five candidates for five vacancies. The candidates are France, Germany, Iceland, Spain and Turkey.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B", "C", "D" and "E" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. Names of Member States on a ballot paper which do not belong to that region will not be counted at all.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Amirbekov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Brauwers (Belgium), Mr. Jeluddin (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Soulama (Burkina Faso), and Mr. Estévez (Guatemala) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Mozambique	178
Gambia	173
Zambia	172
Djibouti	171
Cape Verde	167
Algeria	8
Kenya	6
Ghana	5
Ethiopia	3
Morocco	3
Namibia	1
Zimbabwe	1

Group B — Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Japan	127
Republic of Korea	118
Sri Lanka	90
Viet Nam	84
Indonesia	76
Syrian Arab Republic	30
Papua New Guinea	5
Pakistan	3
Cambodia	1

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	179
Abstentions:	2
Number of Members voting:	177
Required two-thirds majority:	118
Number of votes obtained:	
Latvia	116
Bulgaria	61

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting.	181

Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Chile	156
Cuba	147
Mexico	146
El Salvador	133
Venezuela	120
Guatemala	3
Costa Rica	1
Ecuador	1
Panama	1
Peru	1

Group E — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	2
Number of Members voting:	179
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Germany	176
France	174
Iceland	168
Turkey	167
Spain	166
Ireland	7
Greece	5
Portugal	5
Italy	2
Austria	1
Belgium	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Cape Verde, Chile, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, France, Gambia, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Spain, Turkey and Zambia were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1997.

The President: I congratulate those States which have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

There remain three seats to be filled — two from among the Asian States and one from among the Eastern European States.

We shall therefore proceed to the first restricted ballot.

The second round of balloting shall be restricted to the four States from among the Asian States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot — namely, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam; and to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot — namely, Bulgaria and Latvia.

This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "B" and "C" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on those ballot papers the names of the States for which they wish to vote.

Ballot papers marked "B", for the Asian States, will be declared invalid if they contain the names of States other than Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka or Viet Nam, as well as if they contain the names of more than two States.

Ballot papers marked "C", for the Eastern European States, will be declared invalid if they contain the names of States other than Bulgaria or Latvia, as well as if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Amirbekov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Brauwers (Belgium), Mr. Jeluddin (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Soulama (Burkina Faso) and Mr. Estévez (Guatemala) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 12.55 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121

Number of votes obtained:	
Republic of Korea	128
Sri Lanka	91
Viet Nam	78
Indonesia	61

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	180
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Latvia	138
Bulgaria	42

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Latvia and the Republic of Korea were elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1997.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council.

There remains one seat to be filled from among the Asian States.

We shall therefore proceed to the second restricted ballot.

The third round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Asian States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot — namely, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.

This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed. May I ask representatives to write on those ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote.

Ballot papers marked "B", for the Asian States, will be declared invalid if they contain the names of States other than Sri Lanka or Viet Nam as well as if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Amirbekov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Brauwers (Belgium), Mr. Jeluddin (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Soulama (Burkina Faso) and Mr. Estévez (Guatemala) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m. and resumed at 1.30 p.m.

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B - Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	174
Number of invalid ballots:	3
Number of valid ballots:	171
Abstentions:	3
Number of Members voting:	168
Required two-thirds majority:	112
Number of votes obtained:	
Sri Lanka	105
Viet Nam	63

The Acting President: Since no candidates obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Asian States.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, we should continue with the series of restricted ballots. However, in view of the late hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting until 3 p.m.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.48

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

48th plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 October 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President: This afternoon the General Assembly will continue with the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 1996.

As members will recall, when the 47th plenary meeting was adjourned earlier today there still remained one seat to be filled from among the Asian States.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to the fourth round of balloting, by secret ballot, for the remaining seat from among the Asian States.

This fourth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Asian States which were not elected but which obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.

This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "B" will now be distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote.

Ballot papers marked "B", for the Asian States, will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Sri Lanka or Viet Nam, as well as if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Amirbekov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Brauwers (Belgium), Mr. Nor (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Soulama (Burkina Faso), and Mr. Estévez (Guatemala) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	168
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	168
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members voting:	167
Required two-thirds majority:	112
Number of votes obtained:	
Sri Lanka	112
Viet Nam	55

96-86670 (E)

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Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Sri Lanka was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1997.

The President: I congratulate Sri Lanka on its election.

The following 18 States have thus been elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 1997: Cape Verde, Chile, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, France, Gambia, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Zambia.

I wish to thank the tellers and the Secretariat for their assistance in this election.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 15 (b).

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.49

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

49th plenary meeting
Friday, 1 November 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Much attention was devoted, throughout the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, to the question of the restructuring and reform of the Security Council. Much of that exercise was initiated and conducted partly because it was the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and many thought that something needed to be done as it turned 50, and partly because of the serious financial situation in which the Organization found itself, leading to the search for some sort of a package deal that would quickly fix these financial problems and make them disappear at the snap of a finger.

Little thought was given, however, to the far deeper need to re-examine the very fundamentals on which our assumptions of 1945 were built and to attempt to identify a fresh set of objectives that could lead our Organization into its next half century. It is this inability to come to terms with the new realities of a world 50 years down the line that has led to the impasse we are at today.

Throughout the fiftieth anniversary year, the negotiations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council remained largely deadlocked. The report of the Open-ended Working Group, contained in document A/50/47 of 13 September 1996, confirms this, as it shows that no headway was made on any of the core issues during 1996. It is unfortunate that despite three years of negotiations we are not even close to reaching agreement on the fundamental issues of the expansion and reform of the Security Council. The fact is that this is due to the very wide divergence of views on the fundamental principles on the basis of which the Council should be expanded.

There are those who want the reform of the Council to merely take into account the appearance of some new political and economic actors on the global scene. The vast majority, however, argues that the reform should take into account the emergence of a large number of countries as a result of the decolonization process that took place after the Second World War. There are also those who rightly argue that if we really want to reform the Security Council, then we should re-examine the fundamental assumptions on which this institution was established in 1945 and see if these are still valid after 50 years, and whether they will continue to be valid for the next 50 years. The situation in 1945 was after all a totally extraordinary but static one. The victors of the Second World War simply allocated to themselves permanent seats on the Security Council. In the process, they created a non-democratic centre of privilege and invented the anachronistic veto. We should not, therefore, repeat the mistake of 1945.

96-86676 (E)

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Over the past three years, our debate in the Working Group has been mostly repetitive. We have moved from an issue approach to a cluster approach, and back to an issue approach again in an effort to make forward movement. If we have not been able to succeed, it is because the problem before us is essentially political and not procedural in nature, with vast differences in opinions.

The fact is that there is no consensus today, nor is one likely in the foreseeable future, on a quick expansion in the permanent membership of the Security Council. The reality is that the existing permanent members are not willing to accept restrictions on their power of the veto, let alone to renounce it. The fact is that many important members of the Security Council and the General Assembly are not even willing to allow forward movement on the working methods of the Security Council, as they want to hold any reform of the working methods hostage to a quick decision on expansion. The reality is that, but for a few countries, most of the members of the General Assembly would be quite happy to see an expansion of the non-permanent category alone in the Security Council.

Over a dozen proposals have so far been formally submitted on the question of an increase in the membership of the Council. However, none of these proposals appears to have been able to attract the necessary two-thirds majority in support. We know that six countries have announced their candidatures for the permanent membership of the Council. Two of them are economic Powers today. Others are being perceived as no more than floor-crossers from the original Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) position on centres of privilege that they themselves had traditionally espoused.

Pakistan continues to be strongly opposed to any increase in the permanent membership of the Council. The Prime Minister of Pakistan at the fiftieth anniversary session of the General Assembly said that:

> "The Security Council needs enlargement, but not in its permanent membership." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, 39th meeting, p. 24)*

That statement echoes the opinion of the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations.

We believe that any increase in the permanent membership would serve the interests of only a few countries and would be to the detriment of small and medium-sized countries, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations. Pakistan, like most of the others, remains strongly opposed to centres of privilege within the United Nations system. These are anachronistic, anti-democratic, and contrary to the spirit of sovereign equality as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

An important fallout of permanent membership is the "cascade effect", which has been described in document A/AC.247/5 of 14 September 1995. It would be fair to say that by increasing permanent membership, we would not only strengthen the club of the aristocratic elite, but would also proportionately reduce the chances of election of non-members to United Nations organs.

Pakistan and many other countries advocate an increase in the category of non-permanent membership in order to proportionately reflect the increase that has taken place in the general membership of the United Nations. In this regard, the non-aligned position is that if there is no consensus on an increase in other categories of membership — and as we know there is none — then expansion should take place only in the non-permanent category for the time being. Only a very few delegations have categorically stated that if there was no increase in the permanent membership, there would be no expansion of the Security Council at all.

It is high time, then, for us to try as quickly as we can, to establish that which is achievable, and that which is not. To do so, we need to determine first of all, once and for all, whether there is or is not any chance of a consensus emerging on the issue of the expansion of permanent membership. If there is not, which clearly appears to be the case, then let us identify, without wasting any more time, what really is doable in the way of Security Council restructuring and reform.

Since major divergences exist, could we not as a first step consider the expansion of non-permanent membership alone, and some reform of the working methods of the Security Council? This would respond to the wishes of the vast majority of Member States. In this context, I would again recall the non-aligned position, namely that if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, then expansion should take place in the non-permanent category for the time being.

At least two papers presented in the Open-ended Working Group already have the support of nearly two thirds of the membership of the United Nations, namely the non-aligned position paper of February 1995, and the

non-aligned veto paper of March this year. In addition, the Mexican proposal on the veto, and the Czech proposal on Article 31 appear to enjoy very wide support. There is also the interesting Italian proposal, which has received very wide support, and which in essence refers to an increase in the non-permanent membership. These papers could form the basis of our future discussions in the Working Group.

The Czech proposal that non-members of the Security Council should be allowed to participate in informal consultations of the Council under Article 31 of the Charter, hits the nail on the head on the question of the absence of transparency in the so-called informal working processes of the Security Council. This absence of transparency was less important some years ago, when the Security Council met infrequently and adopted only the very few resolutions that it did. Now that it meets every day, mostly in informals, and is taking daily decisions, surely some method can be found to enable those who are interested to observe and follow its work and deliberations in a more elegant manner than through corridor gossip and hearsay.

Other issues that merit consideration include enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly; consultation between the Security Council members and a country which may be affected by a decision of the Council; the institutionalization of consultations between the President of the Security Council with the respective Chairmen of regional groups on important issues, regular and transparent briefings on informal consultations; the institutionalization of a system of consultations during the decision-making process on the establishment, the conduct and the termination of peacekeeping operations; the availability to all Members of the records of the sanctions committees; the greater use of political mediation arrangements by the Security Council for the settlement of disputes; the use by the Council of the International Court of Justice; a greater involvement of the general membership in the decision-making process of the Council; the institutionalization of the briefings of the President of the Council to the general membership; provisions for the prompt convening of formal meetings of the Security Council at the request of a State Member of the United Nations; and a review of the veto power of the permanent members.

In conclusion, we are not here to repeat or compound the errors of 1945, but to reverse them. Our objective should be to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods, and other matters related to its functioning, in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character, and improves its working efficiency. It is not an easy objective, but let us make an honest attempt to achieve it.

Mr. Butler (Australia): Mr. President, as this is the first occasion on which I am addressing the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, may I begin by repeating the remarks made to you on 30 September by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer, when he expressed to you the immense pleasure Australia feels at seeing you, the representative of a close, neighbouring country, presiding over this Assembly. I know personally that your skill and determination will guide us well in the year ahead.

It is impressive that so many Member States have chosen to take part in this plenary debate on the question of the Security Council of the future. As it has been a long debate, I will come fairly directly to the point.

No one should doubt the deep importance of this subject. Of all the things known about the United Nations amongst interested groups of people around the world, the first is that the current configuration of the Security Council is no longer right. The same is true of the world's media. Sadly, the media all too often fail to report other aspects of the work of the United Nations, but unfailingly report the work of the Security Council; and the media, like ordinary citizens, know that the Security Council needs to be modernized.

These facts have a clear meaning. If we delay any further in coming towards closure of our work on the modernization of the Security Council, we will risk serious criticism and ultimately great harm to the United Nations in ways that go beyond the work of the Council itself. It is with this conviction that Australia offers the following remarks.

The debate of the past few days has shown, once again, that there is general acceptance that the Security Council must be expanded and modernized. The question of how expansion and modernization should be achieved has been the subject of intense, often difficult but, ultimately, very valuable discussion in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Australia is deeply grateful to the co-Vice-Chairmen for their work and, perhaps especially, for their patience.

What can be said of last year's work? First, the Open-ended Working Group made substantive progress during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly in laying the groundwork for a solution with respect to the size and composition of an expanded and modernized Council; the decision-making processes of such a Council, including the veto; and improvements in its working methods. Secondly, but paradoxically, despite the richness of the debate and our exhaustive discussion of proposals and approaches, the Working Group was obliged to conclude its deliberations of the fiftieth session no closer to an agreed solution than when it began, three years ago.

The meaning of these two equal but apparently contradictory facts is that we must find a way to move forward during the fifty-first session of the Assembly. Put simply, the kind of shadow-play we have been witnessing should come to an end.

The Working Group must not continue simply to debate the issues for a further year. The issues have been thoroughly discussed. We are all familiar with them. To repeat the debates yet again would lead nowhere, other than possibly to public disappointment.

What we must do now is begin serious negotiations on a whole package of amendments to the Charter, because, let no one forget, in the end that is what is at issue here — amendments to the Charter.

Australia will work actively for a consensus outcome. Negotiations to that end should be concluded within a reasonable time-frame and presented to the General Assembly for consideration, in accordance with Article 108 of the Charter. If consensus does not prove possible, then a package that appeared to command the support of a very substantial majority of Member States might have to be acted upon by the Assembly.

Australia shares the widely accepted view that the membership of the Security Council needs to better reflect current political and economic circumstances. We think that the following elements would be essential parts of any such whole reform package.

First, Japan and Germany must become permanent members. This is the very least the United Nations can do to acknowledge their status and the financial contribution they are making to the Organization.

There must also be permanent seats for under-represented regions. How this should be achieved needs further discussion. Not what but how this should be achieved needs further discussion, primarily by the regions concerned. For Australia's part, we are flexible. Such seats could conceivably be filled by a single Member State or by rotating membership amongst leading Member States, but agreed to by the regional groupings.

Next, the number of non-permanent members of the Council should be increased in such a way as to ensure more balanced and equitable representation. In this context, a number of interesting proposals have been put forward in the Working Group, and again Australia remains willing to discuss these flexibly.

So what would this mean for the total? The total number for an expanded Council should be about 25. Such a number would allow for the kinds of increases I have just mentioned without causing a reduction in the efficiency of the work of the Council.

In addition, it is essential that the terms of Article 23 of the Charter, with respect to the characteristics of States seeking election to the Council, be followed faithfully. The Council is not a universal body but a representative one. It must be made up of States that meet the primary criteria outlined in Article 23. The democracy of the United Nations is deeply rooted in the General Assembly, but the Council reports to the Assembly.

We must insist, then, that its report be material, not merely procedural, and that consideration of it by the Assembly is a significant political event and be recognized as such. It is in this context — the context of the democracy of the General Assembly — that every Member State has and must retain its equal voice with all others. But those who preach a notion of rotation as a first principle in the context of elections to the Security Council are in fact seeking to revise the important terms of Article 23 of the Charter.

It is beyond doubt that there is deep concern to arrive at a new understanding and clarification of the veto power, its inner nature and the legitimate conditions under which it can and should be used. Unwelcome though this issue may be for some, it must be pursued.

As a final point, I would emphasize that without agreement on the size and composition of the Security Council, other pressing aspects of both Security Council and wider United Nations reform are very unlikely to be realized. The most pressing example of this is provided by the current debates on contributions to be paid by

Member States. These issues are not likely to be resolved until Member States have decided on an increase in the permanent membership of the Council, given the implications that such an expansion would have for the scale of assessments and the payment of contributions.

I hope that, during your term as President and under your guidance, this Assembly will see substantial progress towards solutions to the reform of both the Security Council and the United Nations more widely, in keeping with the agreement reached in the fiftieth anniversary Declaration that we

> "will give to the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established". *(Resolution 50/6, fifth preambular paragraph)*

My delegation will support you in whatever steps you take towards ensuring the beginning of substantive negotiations on a package of amendments to the Charter through which the Security Council can be modernized.

Mr. Van-Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola): I would like to thank you, Sir, for calling on me to express, in the name of my Government, our point of view on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

At a time when profound changes are taking place in the international arena and the United Nations is being increasingly called upon to face new challenges that are not always conciliatory and require the concerted efforts of all Member States, regardless of size, geographical situation or economic and military might, it is vital that a broad programme of comprehensive reform of the multilateral institutions be adopted to further measures, in a decisive manner, for the democratization of international relations based on the rule of law and the mutual benefit of States.

My delegation took note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, which reflects the agreement reached on the need to expand the Security Council, review its working methods and other questions related to its operation, in such a way as to reinforce its capacity and effectiveness.

Allow me to express our support for you, Sir, in your assignment of steering these proceedings and, at the same time, to acknowledge all those who have made a dedicated effort to accomplish this work, in particular the outgoing President and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. We hope the outcome of those efforts will help improve international relations in the days ahead.

We would like also to support the statement made by the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As an important component of United Nations reform, the reform of the Security Council presents itself today, as we approach a new century, more than ever before as a crucial need to which no one can remain indifferent.

The reform of the Security Council must focus on redressing the imbalance in regional representation, a particularly serious inadequacy in the representation of developing countries. A more democratic and transparent Security Council, as far as decision-making and implementation are concerned, can only become a reality when it has equitable, and hence non-discriminatory, representation and when the number of its permanent and non-permanent members is addressed in the light of the new realities arising from 50 years of the work of the United Nations.

We believe that such an important body of the United Nations should have the necessary prerogatives to respond to the challenges of today's changing world. An organ such as the Security Council has to be strong and responsible enough to tackle international matters whenever and wherever it is required to do so. It is nevertheless important to state that efforts to ensure the transparent character of this body must continue.

For the Republic of Angola, whose position of principle on this matter is the same as that stated by the Organization of African Unity, the claim to a minimum of two permanent seats in the Security Council is the claim to a right to which the African continent is entitled and one that we will not abdicate.

We also support the right of other world regions to be equitably represented in the Security Council through permanent member status. In our opinion, it is not enough, however, to increase the number of permanent and non-permanent members in the Council; it is also crucial that the new members elected to this relevant United Nations organ be recognized as having all the

appropriate rights and responsibilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, including the veto right, on an equal footing. We have noticed with great apprehension that, in some circles, a new category of permanent member is being discussed that would deprive the respective countries of some of the prerogatives that the current five permanent members have today. My country vigorously opposes that solution and appeals to its sponsors to give up this idea.

The use of the veto by the current permanent members of the Security Council is a question that concerns us all and that, in our opinion, warrants the careful attention of the Open-ended Working Group in charge of the reform of the Security Council, although we believe that the discussion of such a matter should not be linked to the decision that will be made on the expansion of the Council.

In the opinion of my country, Angola, the use of the veto is inconsistent with present-day realities, and therefore we are in favour of its abolition or, if that is not possible, of its amendment and the consequent granting of that prerogative to new members that are elected. My delegation considers that major elements for comprehensive reform are now on the table and that at its next round of substantive discussions the Working Group should move to a more concrete phase.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our willingness to continue to work within the Open-ended Working Group, because we believe that, with the concurrence of all Members of the United Nations, it will be possible to transform the Security Council into a more democratic United Nations body, with operating methods that do not discriminate against any country or region in the world and that will help to make our planet a world of peace and development.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I welcome once again the opportunity to participate, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland, in deliberations on this very important core issue of United Nations reform: the question of equitable representation on and expansion of the Security Council.

The Security Council is the only organ of the United Nations charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. Its successes or failures, weaknesses or strengths affect all Member States as well as the other organs of the United Nations. It is therefore important for the Council to underscore its legitimacy through equitable representation that is proportional to the increase in the membership of the United Nations. Without such expanded representation, the legitimacy of its authority remains questionable.

When the Organization was formed 50 years ago, many countries in existence today, especially in the regions of Africa and Asia, were still fighting for their independence from colonial occupation and domination. The world had just experienced the gigantic scourge of the Second World War. The painful lesson of the war prompted the victors, meeting in San Francisco, to arrogate to themselves enormous powers and privileges in an effort to ensure that the mistakes that had led to the war would not recur.

Enormous changes have taken place since the formation of the Security Council, and since the end of the cold war — most notably, the increase in the membership of the United Nations. Obviously, the status quo in the Security Council does not reflect all contemporary realities. This legacy should not continue in perpetuity. The fact that circumstances in the international system have changed so fundamentally is a compelling reason for change in the composition of the Council. The present composition of the Security Council is generally unrepresentative, iniquitous and anachronistic. Such a situation is inconsistent with the universal principles of democracy and the equality of States. These principles not only hold sway, but also form the cornerstone of international discourse among nations.

The issue of the size and composition of the Security Council, particularly with regard to the permanent membership, which is the bone of contention, is also of major concern to my delegation. The Kingdom of Swaziland is convinced that the position of Africa in its quest for a minimum of two permanent seats is necessary and justifiable. We therefore stand by this view, and we are ready to engage in further discussion with Member States to find a lasting solution to this matter. However, a fruitful debate can be carried out only if the permanent members exercise flexibility to accommodate change.

Several proposals have been advanced for an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We believe that 25 should be a minimum figure and that the principle of equitable geographical representation must be strictly observed in both categories of Security Council membership. In our view this would enhance the legitimacy of the Council's authority; it is the only way to address the imbalance that afflicts the

Council, in which four out of five permanent members represent the same civilization.

Turning to the process of decision-making in the Security Council, including the issue of the veto, my delegation fully associates itself with the declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement that was adopted at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Cartagena, Colombia, in October 1995, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to promote a better relationship between the Council and the General Assembly and also to encourage the curtailment of the use of the veto.

Finally, measures should be taken by the Council to enhance its working methods and procedures and to improve its working relationship with the other United Nations organs and the general membership. Such measures should also be formalized and institutionalized so as to ensure their effective systematic implementation. While we recognize the fact that measures have been taken by the Council to improve its working methods, these measures remain partial and unpredictable, and are implemented only at the whim and will of the Council.

I should like to make some remarks addressed directly to you, Mr. President, in your capacity as my colleague and friend. Your country has assumed the presidency of the General Assembly, and it is faced with a number of crucial issues that beset the global world today. I have this question to ask you, Mr. President: Have you ever considered the possibility of holding a session in which Member States could devote time to invite God to participate with us? In such a session we could pray, in all the languages that we speak here, asking God to intervene to guide the United Nations, especially the Security Council, as it faces and disentangles the issues that are a bone of contention, and deals with the pain that affects us from head to toe and to our deepest marrow.

Any success that we can achieve can be possible only if God the Almighty can be invited persistently and be given a chance. I know very well, Mr. President, that you say you pray in your own household. I wish to reaffirm the belief of the Kingdom of Swaziland, which believes in God, that, where there is a problem, God is ready to intervene. There is a problem in the Security Council, but how often have we invited God to soften the hearts of those countries that are misusing the power of veto to the great detriment of the small nations? You will pardon me, Mr. President; the spirit of God has inspired me. But I would conclude by inviting you to consider this seriously. Through God, we shall be successful. Through God, the United Nations can change.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): In contributing to the debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group who, during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, worked tirelessly and with a great deal of purpose and patience in an effort to reach meaningful conclusions. The deliberations thus far have revealed the complexity of the subject matter and the challenges facing the Working Group. It has certainly not been an easy task, and the position of the co-Vice-Chairmen has not been a particularly enviable one. We thank them for the efforts they have made in producing the report of the Working Group, which is now before us as document A/50/47 of 13 September 1996.

As one of the sponsors of the initial resolution that led to the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the Nigerian delegation is disappointed that after such a long period of time we are no nearer to an agreement on the most appropriate composition of the Council, nor are we closer to a solution of the key questions of the expansion and size of the Council in both categories of membership. In fact, we seem to be going around in circles. Year in and year out, the Working Group starts out with a lot of ideas and hopeful proposals, but it seems to end up at a dead end. Against the background of the wide-ranging ideas that have been expressed and the rich discussions we have had, the paucity of this year's report attests to this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

In our judgement, we cannot really reinvent the wheel. The issues are fairly clear. Agreement or progress will be possible only if there is political will to make the hard decisions and undertake the necessary political compromises in order to have a reformed Security Council that is democratic, equitably representative and that truly acts on behalf of all Member States.

The foregoing is not to suggest that there were no positive developments in our deliberations during the past year. For example, the notion of a so-called "quick fix" under any guise has been put to rest. It is inequitable and politically unacceptable, and I am certain that even the potential beneficiaries of such an arrangement would be uncomfortable with such an outcome. Similarly, the concept of rotational permanent seats, even on a regional

basis for developing countries, has not found favour with all Member States. There is therefore the need to revisit the concept.

There was also the notion of a concert of medium Powers that would rotate more frequently as non-permanent members of the Security Council. The difficulty with that option relates to the modalities of determining membership of such a group. In any event, it would be tantamount to establishing a third category of membership that is not recognized by the United Nations Charter. My delegation believes that that option should not really be pursued.

With regard to the working methods of the Council, there has been a great convergence of views on the need for continued improvement, particularly in terms of improved transparency and greater democratization of the Council's decision-making procedures.

On the question of the veto, the Non-Aligned Movement, in a paper that has received overwhelming support, has offered a view. The conclusions reached in that paper deserve the serious consideration of the current permanent members of the Security Council. In our view, permanent membership confers a privileged status that in turn implies responsibilities and obligations. It is our hope, therefore, that the permanent members will see their way clear as to the necessity of the needed reform of the Security Council and extend their willing cooperation to the process in the interest of their own credibility, equity and justice. Until the veto is ultimately abolished, we believe that its use should be rational and selective and confined only to issues under Chapter VII of the Charter. Clearly, we fail to understand why, in today's world and in terms of *realpolitik*, the decision on the appointment of a Secretary-General — and for that matter, the next Secretary-General of the Organization — should be subject to the preferred options or predilections of one or two powerful Member States. It is a question that should be considered in a fully democratic and transparent manner by the General Assembly so as to ensure that whoever emerges enjoys the support of all Member States. The same principle should apply when we consider the admission of new Members.

Concerning the composition and size of the Council, my delegation continues to assert that the current anomaly of non-African representation in the permanent membership category deserves urgent correction. for the continent has not only the largest number of United Nations Member States, but those States, collectively, constitute almost one third of the United Nations general membership. In this context, the collective decision of Africa to have a two-seat representation in the permanent membership category deserves the full support of all Member States. We would, however, wish to clarify that the modalities of that representation should be left to Africa.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Charter recognizes two categories of membership. We believe that the proposed increases should therefore be in these two categories, permanent and non-permanent membership, without discrimination between the powers of the old permanent members and the new ones. All permanent members should enjoy the same rights and powers and assume the responsibilities incumbent on membership. Besides, the Charter provisions should not be amended solely to serve a short-term purpose.

In conclusion, let me say that the fiftieth session of the General Assembly provided an enabling momentum for our work by further clarifying issues and concepts. Our Working Group's deliberations should not be interminable. We believe that the status quo in the Council is unrepresentative and out of tune with current international realities. It demands urgent collective action for its restructuring and reform.

We therefore charge the Open-ended Working Group with redoubling its efforts during this fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under Mr. Razali's distinguished chairmanship, in order to come up with concrete proposals that would address in a holistic manner, and not piecemeal, all the issues regarding an increase in permanent and non-permanent membership, working methods of the Security Council and the question of equitable geographical distribution of seats in the Council. It is appropriate to state that with the necessary political will it is possible to reform and restructure the Security Council to meet our collective wishes and aspirations.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): For three years now our Working Group has been considering all aspects of the reform of the Security Council. Thanks to the active participation of Member States, under the wise guidance of our two Vice-Chairmen, many proposals have been made and lengthy discussions have been held.

Allow me to remind those who might have forgotten that a group of Member States, including Belgium, submitted a document for discussion only which was reproduced in the report of the forty-ninth session. We

believe that, broadly speaking, the principles contained in that document have lost none of their validity and are still relevant. And we are prepared to discuss them with those who share similar concerns.

What are these principles? I would single out three. First, reform will be useful only if it leads to increased efficiency in the Security Council. Secondly, the current representation of the Council no longer reflects today's realities and needs to be strengthened. Finally, there is a need to restore legitimacy to the limited body that is the Security Council.

Implementation of these principles should in the longer run allow us to agree on the following points. First, expansion of the Security Council should take place in the two categories of permanent members and non-permanent members; in our view, this is primarily a question of balance within the Council. Secondly, the increase in permanent and non-permanent members should be based on the current distinction between the two categories. Thirdly, the expanded Council should not consist of more than 25 members. Fourthly, a limit on the usage of the veto should be discussed. Fifthly, it should be possible to review the membership of the Council.

We believe that it is time to move beyond the phase of discussions and exchanges of views, which, it must be admitted, have in recent months become rather repetitive. Let us be quite clear: there is no panacea for reforming the Security Council. However, several aspects of the proposals submitted and of the ideas introduced deserve more in-depth discussion so they can be judged on their own merits. In our view — and this is just an example — the idea of regional representation for the category of permanent members, assuming that there is to be an increase in the two categories of members, requires further analysis, based objectively on its advantages and disadvantages. Similarly, a debate on the use of the veto or on the review of the Council's composition — to take two other examples — remains necessary, if only to clarify our thinking.

Finally, with regard to improving the working methods of the Council, we believe, as many others do, that real progress has been made. However, we believe that current measures need to be taken farther. In particular, we need to see to it that certain principles and certain rules of transparency are applied. We think that such vigilance would be more useful than requiring that the measures be formalized and institutionalized. But we see no problem in such formalization where it is conceivable and possible.

We really believe that, after three years of discussion, it is time to identify the various points that need to be considered calmly and in greater depth and to act accordingly. We now need to move forward. The credibility of the Organization as a whole is at stake.

Mr. Escovar-Salom (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Declaration adopted on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, says that

> "The Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continue to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency; as important differences on key issues continue to exist, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required." *(Resolution 50/6, Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, para. 14)*

The international community must abide by this commitment. In this context, we express our support for the endeavours of the Open-ended Working Group on the subject now before us. We hope that soon, when we take up this work again, we will arrive at a consensus.

From the start of the debates on the reform of the Security Council, Venezuela has reiterated its position that a comprehensive approach should be taken to its restructuring, account being taken of all dimensions of the issue, particularly in the areas of composition, decision-making and working methods.

As to its composition, we have advocated a modification that would reflect the increase in the membership of the United Nations and improve the arrangements of 1945 in order to move towards more democratic formulas. Venezuela expressed this position even when the Organization was created. In this way, regional groups could be guaranteed greater representation, and a more proportional and representative relationship between the Council and the General Assembly would be established, which would greatly enhance the legitimacy of the Organization.

We consider that this increase in the membership of the Council should apply to the category of permanent members as well as to that of non-permanent members. If we do not succeed in obtaining a consensus on a straightforward increase in the permanent membership of the Council, we might consider a rotation among those

countries that, although not permanent members, could also contribute actively to the taking and implementation of Security Council decisions. Furthermore, all the other non-permanent members should have their annual chance of assuming a seat on the Council increased.

We do not believe that only economic, political or military potential should be taken into consideration in this matter. In any case, what is set out in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter is still valid because of its flexibility with regard to the election of countries for the two existing categories, as well as with regard to the possibility of a new formula.

With regard to working methods, even though there has been no agreement on basic aspects, progress has been made in the search for greater transparency. We insist on the need for the Security Council to continue to improve its procedures, and we consider that only the comprehensive reform of the Council will lead to a real increase in its legitimacy and efficiency.

Regarding the decision-making process, my country has, ever since it became a Member of the United Nations in 1945, been in favour of eliminating a power that was created in response to circumstances that no longer exist today. We believe that this exceptional faculty should be limited to cases that endanger international peace and security, on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter.

We appreciate the complexity of this process, but we also must stress that if we remain bogged down in the exchange of views, the process could become an interminable and fruitless debate that would hinder the achievement of specific agreements and risk losing the impetus gained on this issue in recent years.

Venezuela is still convinced of the need to review and modify the structure of that organ in the light of the demands of a changing world. It is therefore essential to continue the endeavours to achieve a Security Council that represents all regions fairly. We should demonstrate to world public opinion our creativity in designing new formulas, as well as our political will to reach consensus in a matter of such great importance. An agreement in this matter will no doubt establish the bases for an international order of greater solidarity, ensuring the reign of law and justice.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The rich diversity that has characterized the debate on Security Council reform is encouraging. In its report, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council identifies issues and problem areas. However, the dynamics within the Group have not as yet led to common ground. Our collective endeavours during the forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth session have not born fruit.

This fact in itself demands reflection. It indicates the importance Member States attach to the Security Council's role and to changes which have occurred and will continue to occur in the international community. Awareness of the need to expand the Security Council to enhance its representative character is equalled by that of retaining and improving upon its efficiency. Neither of these two basic objectives is divisive. It is in the method by which these objectives are to be pursued that differences exist.

Debate has stimulated creativity. The benefit of the diversity of possible options, however, is counterbalanced by the distance which still persists between national positions. The negotiating process requires of us a marked effort to bring to fruition three years of debate and discussion. Indeed, our shared belief in the need to expand and enhance the efficiency of the Security Council imposes a degree of urgency in the identification of solutions. The way forward requires flexibility and compromise as tools. It also demands a reciprocal effort in understanding and comprehending the aspirations and the concerns of different delegations.

The report correctly states that during discussions on the size and composition of the Security Council,

> "It became clear ... that a number of Member States were not ready to take final positions because of interlinkages between the size and composition and other matters in the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group." (*A/50/47, para. 23*)

On the question of an increase in permanent membership, many States have retained an open mind, asking legitimate questions regarding the criteria on which to base such a decision, now and in the future, for any course of action adopted will, in fact, establish a precedent. Can the historical realities which influenced the Council's composition 50 years ago be paralleled or matched in any way by present contingencies? Can earlier or existing proportionality justify extrapolation today? How can factors which are non-permanent and change over time determine permanence?

Malta has listened attentively to the answers given to such questions and has taken note of the disposition of States that have expressed a willingness to serve. Regardless of the evaluation of these answers by individual Member States, the fact remains that at present a common position on this delicate issue appears remote. Should this impasse block altogether the prospect of an equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council? Compromise solutions could be inspired by contemporary trends, realities and practices.

We have a number of proposals and formulas on the table which seek to direct us to the path of compromise, whether for arrangements for a more frequent rotation by certain Member States, or for the expansion of the non-permanent category to reflect the number of States in each region, or for following the precedent set in the first expansion, when there was an equal increase in the number of non-permanent seats per regional group. The current distance in positions could also point towards first-step solutions, if only for now. This would help us avoid being hostage to those fundamental questions that still need to be resolved. The Non-Aligned Movement's suggestion to overcome the lack of agreement on the increase in other categories of membership by expanding, for the time being, the non-permanent category is an option to be borne in mind.

Realpolitik can take us a step further. Expansion could take stock of the de facto patterns of service on the Council, which reflect the increased role and contribution of some Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security. We all are conscious of the desire and will to serve of those able to do so more regularly. Their past role and their future potential holds promise for an effective contribution to the work of the Security Council. Italy's proposal in this regard seeks to take into account these realities without creating new categories of membership. Malta continues to view this proposal with positive interest, as it recognizes both the special contribution of a number of States and the right of all States to serve on the Council regardless of their size, wealth or military might.

Apart from restating the need for equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, the report also reiterates the call for improved transparency and efficiency in the Council's work. Improvement of the working methods of the Security Council cannot be underestimated. A number of measures have already been taken to better the flow of information between the Council and the general membership. Such efforts enhance the relationship between the two. This is an absolute necessity, for regardless of the extent of the expansion that may ultimately be agreed upon, at any point in time the vast majority of Member States will not be on the Council. Lack of information could impede that active symbiotic relationship between the Council and the General Assembly to which we all aspire.

An enhanced, structured process of consultation between these two principal organs and their members would contribute to the transparency of the work of the Council and facilitate the Assembly's effective input, particularly in those areas or on those issues of which the Council has been seized for prolonged periods of time or on which it has encountered difficulty in taking immediate and effective action.

The world community can only benefit from an actively enhanced engagement of the General Assembly and its members in the search for solutions to issues of concern, which cause suffering and distress to whole populations of innocent victims.

Our discussions on decision-making in the Council have also led to interesting exchanges. The veto and its use and extension have been debated extensively. Malta has already stated that the question of veto can best be resolved by letting the veto fall into disuse without prejudicing future discussion on the desirability of its abolition. Other equally important aspects of decision-making deserve earnest consideration. The further involvement of affected States in the decision-making process, albeit not in the decision-making of the Council itself, would enhance the Council's effectiveness. Such important exchanges as have occurred very recently have enabled interested Member States to address items of concern to them and the Council itself to better reflect the will of the international community it represents.

The maintenance of international peace and security and the central role of the Security Council are as crucial to the substance of this debate as they are to the Organization. Most of the reforms proposed retain the role of the Security Council as guarantor of peace, while recognizing the need for an evolution in its membership and in its relationship with the General Assembly. The final outcome of this exercise must safeguard the institutional balance that the Charter provides.

The item before us remains delicate. The road ahead is neither simple nor easy. Through sustained effort, future discussions can benefit from the lessons of the

present. This requires of all Member States the political will to seek common ground and build on compromise to give to the international community an expanded and enhanced Security Council.

Mr. Mtango (United Republic of Tanzania): The agenda item before us has, understandably, attracted divergent views, positions and proposals from the entire membership of the United Nations and the world community at large. The intense and varied exchange of views that has been going on for the last three years is clear testimony to the importance the world attaches to this organ and its role in determining the destiny of our Organization.

The end of the cold war and the tremendous increase in the Organization's membership have made the need for reform not only compelling but possible. With a membership of 51 at the time of its inception five decades ago, the United Nations had a total of six non-permanent members on the Security Council, representing about 12 per cent of the total membership of the Organization. With the current almost fourfold increase, the percentage has further dwindled, as the present 10 non-permanent members of the Council now represent less than 6 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. While we all agree on the need for reform, we have so far not reached agreement on the nature and scope of the reforms to be effected. This is the crux of the matter.

My delegation has underlined that the reforms of the Council must be both comprehensive and continuous. This means that for us, the overriding objective of the reforms is to bring about the Council's greater democratization by restoring the balance of representation between the developed North and the developing South in both categories of membership. We see this as a process that will bring justice and greater empowerment to the Council. For, ultimately, if we reach agreement on a balanced expansion of membership in both categories by reforming its working methods and its decision-making procedures, we shall have erected a firm foundation for a dynamic, efficient and more relevant Council whose jurisdiction and decisions will enjoy universal acceptance.

The Council today faces new and complex problems of security that were not apparent 50 years ago, or were subsumed within the international political processes at play within the larger context of the cold war. Today the problems of internal conflicts, of various potential areas of instability and of terrorism have direct implications for international peace and security.

All these matters require new and creative approaches, including those of peacemaking, peace-building and even peacekeeping. The Council therefore needs to undergo the kinds of reforms which will make it responsive to and capable of dealing with traditional problems as well as these new ones. What therefore is needed in the reforms we seek is to strengthen the capability of the Council in handling matters of international peace and security. Failure to do so, or insistence on non-reforms such as partial measures, will not only serve to reinforce the status quo, but will also do harm to the integrity and efficiency of the Council and undermine our collective efforts.

Africa, being the most under-represented, should be given the highest priority since it has three non-permanent members, compared to, say, the Western region which has a total of seven seats — four permanent members, and three non-permanent members. Africa deserves at least two permanent members in the Council and also, in all fairness, an increase in the non-permanent seats.

Needless to say, the Council will have to undertake periodic reviews of its mission, membership and working methods, as well as continuously adjust to changing circumstances and address itself to new needs. This is why we must not see the present exercise as a one-off issue, but rather as a necessary and continuing process of consultations. Of course, the issues are difficult, especially because they involve questioning entrenched political privileges of some of our countries, and the possibility of limited devolution of some prerogatives. This notwithstanding, we must persevere and not succumb to the easy but temporary options of abandoning the reform process or to the temptation of partial measures. Ultimately, humanity in its entirety has a legitimate right to ask for involvement in decisions that affect its well-being and its future.

Linked to the expansion of membership is the question of the Council's methods of work, including its decision-making procedures. Increasingly, decisions are being taken by a few permanent members of the Council, thus steadily moving us away from the lofty ideals enshrined in Article 24 of the Charter. We have repeatedly pointed out the imperative of bringing about greater democratization of the methods of decision-making and allowing for greater transparency. We take note of the efforts made to pull the Council from the shroud of secrecy, but those efforts have only scratched the surface. Decision-making remains the prerogative of a few, often without giving the general membership the

chance to contribute to the making of those decisions. Equally, the working procedures and their resultant decisions remain subservient to the political prerogative of the permanent members and without the rigour of justice or consistency.

The wind of change which has swept across the world has reinvigorated the democratization process. Democracy, transparency, good governance and accountability have become the pillars upon which the Governments of most Member States are anchored. Given the expansion and deepening of democracy at the national level, we should expect to see a corresponding embrace of the ideals of the system at the international level, and certainly within the United Nations. This is why it is a contradiction in terms to see rigidity and arguments for preserving the status quo in the United Nations system for decision-making mechanisms on critical issues, including the question of the veto. The veto power, flawed in principle as it was and remains, may have had a useful purpose during the cold war era, but with the improved international environment and, indeed, the increase of diplomatic avenues to resolve differences, the continued existence of the veto is as undemocratic as it is irrelevant. We must now have a clear resolve to liberate the United Nations from this obsolete and undemocratic legacy of the cold war.

Reforms must not only be real, but must also be just and equitable. Because the Security Council acts on behalf of the general membership of the United Nations, full consideration should be given to the aspirations and interests of developing countries, which account for the majority of the United Nations membership. In this respect, the Assembly, being the most representative of all United Nations bodies, ought to be vested with the most authority and responsibility. After all, is this not the essence of democracy? Greater accountability of the Council to the Assembly should move from the realm of theory to a partnership in facing the new challenges of international peace and security.

Collective security requires the Council to be a genuine representative in terms of equitable geographical participation and for it to cease being an instrument for enforcing policies of an exclusive club. Its members should try to seek the widest support possible in the process of reaching decisions.

Our ultimate objective in pursuing these reforms is to bring about a democratic, representative, dynamic and revitalized Security Council which will be more relevant to the common problems we all face. The new Council will then be able to seek the partnership of all Member States, especially through the General Assembly, in taking decisions by majority consent. That is the ideal we should aim for.

My delegation understands, however, that it will not be easy to reach that objective of democracy, the abolition of the veto and expanded representation as soon as we wish. This is why we are of the strong view that the larger part of the membership of the United Nations ought to be represented in an expanded manner, especially in the permanent category of membership so that, from within, the developing countries can contribute to the process of reform of the Council.

We have every reason to believe that Member States will have the political courage to go the extra mile in favour of a credible and equitably representative new Council. Reforms that do not meet the aspirations of the majority will only perpetuate mistrust and frustration among Member States, thus working against the tide of democracy.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): One of the most topical and important issues now being considered by the United Nations is the question of the reform of the Security Council, the increase in its membership, the strengthening of the proportional representation of regions and the improvement of the working methods and procedures of the organ primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

The current membership of the Council reflects the outcome of the last reform of this body 33 years ago, in 1963. Clearly, much has changed since then and, as a number of statements have pointed out, the current system already seems less ideal than it did in the 1960s. In fact, it has resulted in a situation in which almost 80 countries have never participated in the work of the Security Council and about 40, including a number of founding Members of the Organization, have participated only once.

There are many other aspects of the work of the Security Council that the majority of Member countries of the Organization find unsatisfactory. They include an imbalance in the representation of regional groups in the Council; insufficient transparency in its working methods; the influence of the national interests of a number of leading members of the Council on questions that affect the interests of all the other Member States of the United

Nations; the high price of the right of veto; the negative side effects the sanctions regimes imposed by the Council have on the civilian populations of countries indirectly affected and on the economies of third countries; the failure of a number of peacekeeping operations; and several others. The reform aims to eliminate these deficiencies.

The reform is not designed merely to inform Member States of decisions adopted by the Security Council, but really to ensure the broad participation of all countries in this process. Given the serious differences of position between groups of countries and individual Member States on a whole range of the most important aspects of the reform of the Security Council, the process of reforming this organ should commence with those elements of reform that are supported by most States.

During the recent round of negotiations and consultations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, which is entrusted with consideration of this question and the drafting of corresponding recommendations on it, a number of proposals were made on possible ways to reform the Security Council. As the Assembly knows, positions focus on three basic approaches to the problem. First, reform should lead to an expansion of the category of permanent member of the Security Council. Secondly, reform should be limited to expansion of the category of non-permanent member of the Council, without any expansion of the category of permanent membership. Thirdly, the expansion of the Council should cover both permanent and non-permanent membership while the working methods of the Council, including the use and scope of the right of veto, are improved. At the same time, it is quite clear that, unless agreement is reached on expanding the membership of the Council, it will be impossible or extremely difficult to resolve any other question relating to the work of the Council.

In September this year, on the eve of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group adopted a report which, in our opinion, for the first time over the last three years covers virtually all aspects of the problem spelled out in its full title. We cannot fail to recognize that this was largely brought about by the important fact that the Security Council has recently adopted a number of steps to improve both its interaction with States that are not members of the Council and its working methods. We support a further strengthening of the relationship between the Security Council and the Members of the Organization as a whole. It is hard to imagine any reference to the Security Council as an organ that acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations without this kind of close relationship.

It is characteristic that, at this stage, most United Nations Member States, including Belarus, place particular emphasis on the problem of the equitable and balanced distribution of seats in the Security Council and States' increased participation in its work. The positive side of a number of proposals made during the thorough discussion on an increase of the membership of the Security Council this year is the desire to find a balance among the interests of all groups of countries.

It is appropriate to recall that the membership of the Eastern European Group has almost tripled in recent years. It is no coincidence that, in the summary of discussions contained in the report that the Working Group submitted to the General Assembly, it is reported that:

> "The view was expressed that expansion of the Security Council should also take into account the increase in the membership of the United Nations by countries belonging to Eastern Europe in the context of an overall equitable geographical distribution." (*A/50/47, para. 24*)

Thus, more and more Member States are recognizing that, as things stand today, any increase in the membership of the Security Council would be counter-productive if it did not take account of the interests of the Eastern European Group. While we support this report as a whole, we express the hope that this factor, which has been finally recognized by a majority of Member States will be developed further and logically in all the future activities of the Working Group. From the very outset, we have stressed and are prepared to stress again and again that Security Council reform is possible only if the legitimate interests of all groups of countries are taken into account, since it would be difficult to go along with any decision that would exacerbate the present disproportionate membership in this body.

In their turn, regional groups should establish mechanisms for rotation, in accordance with the universal principle of equitable geographical distribution of seats in the Council, not only among but also within regional groups. When reaching regional agreements on proposing candidacies for non-permanent membership in the Security Council, such important factors as the ability of

applicant countries to contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security should be taken into account. In the light of current priorities, particular attention should be given to countries that make a significant, generally recognized contribution to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and effective efforts to strengthen regional and global security by carrying out their obligations under the major disarmament agreements and treaties in this area.

Nevertheless, there is still not enough awareness of the problem of equitable geographical distribution in reforming the Security Council and attempts are being made to solve the problems of one group of countries at the expense of or by circumventing others. The report of the Working Group on the results of its work for this year and the atmosphere in which it was adopted at the final stage of its work speak volumes about how far we still need to go before we reach consensus, without which the reform of the Security Council will just not work.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I wish first to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral for his chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on the issue before us, and to Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Jayanama for their enormous efforts as Vice-Chairmen of the Group.

Although the Ecuadorian position is widely known by the General Assembly and the Working Group, I believe it is necessary to reiterate its basic aspects. Our position can be summed up as follows.

First, Ecuador considers it necessary to increase the membership of the Security Council in both categories, permanent and non-permanent, since its composition must reflect the current number of United Nations Members and new political realities. Secondly, an increase in the number of permanent seats must be conditioned on the admission to that category of one country from each region of the developing world: Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Thirdly, Ecuador opposes the maintenance of the veto privilege, considering it to be an anti-democratic and obsolete mechanism that does not reflect new global realities. If it is not possible to eliminate the veto, Ecuador suggested that its exercise be limited to cases under Chapter VII of the Charter. Fourthly, if an agreement on an increase in the membership in both categories cannot be reached, we should promote an increase in the number of non-permanent members, as the Council cannot continue with a totally defective anti-democratic composition. To that end, there are several proposals that could serve as a basis, of which we wish to highlight the Italian proposal.

I believe, without prejudice to this position, that certain criteria could be considered for the sole purpose of examining effective possibilities for resolving this particular question, in which all delegations have special interest. As mentioned by other speakers, the report of the Working Group contains 18 written proposals, apart from all verbal suggestions and initiatives presented during the consideration of this item in the General Assembly and in the Working Group. There has not even been the beginning of an agreement on these proposals, suggestions and initiatives, and for this reason the Group confined itself to recommending the continued study of this matter in 1997, bearing in mind the progress, if it can be called progress, achieved during the forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions, as well as during the current session.

In these circumstances, everything seems to indicate that we may hear yet again the repetition of widely known arguments and positions, which will not lead us to results. Therefore, I believe it is time to search for a practical solution through the Working Group's future efforts based on this debate in plenary. Such a solution could be attained through the development of an integrated negotiating package to be adopted by consensus, which is the only way of ensuring its viability. That package should take into consideration those aspects that have majority backing and should be based fundamentally on the new global political and juridical realities, including the serious and undeniable circumstances that make it difficult to reform the Charter.

The negotiating package could be composed of the following six basic elements. First, the number of permanent members could be increased on the basis of the aforementioned criteria, which is to say, on the basis of the considerable support enjoyed by candidates. That would mean that up to five new permanent members could be added, taking into consideration the contribution of the candidates to the essential aims of the Organization. Secondly, the number of non-permanent members could be increased in such a way as to maintain a proper balance between permanent and non-permanent members, while at the same time producing a total membership of the Council that would ensure effectiveness and efficiency in its procedures. That increase could entail seven new members. Thirdly, in accordance with the Charter, it must be recognized that discriminatory distinctions or criteria should not be applied to the various permanent members with regard to

the exercise of rights and obligations. Fourthly, there should be a commitment on the part of all permanent members, through a declaration, to restrict exercise of the veto to cases under Chapter VII of the Charter. As this instrument cannot be modified through a declaration, that commitment would be more a pledge of intention. Fifthly, the adoption of norms of procedure that effectively ensure transparency and democratization in all aspects of the functions and activities of the Security Council, a matter on which there is ample room for consensus among all delegations. Sixthly, this package could be reviewed after 15 to 20 years, to determine changes necessary in the light of the new global realities.

Delegations should make a serious effort to review the contents of this negotiating package, inspired by a firm political will to make concessions that might seem very sizeable to many countries, but that in the end will yield considerable results.

However, everyone is aware of the difficulties involved in the preparation and adoption by consensus of such a negotiating package. Should it prove too difficult, the only alternative would be to look to an increase in the non-permanent member category alone, together with the adoption of norms that ensure the transparency and democratization of the Council's procedures.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I wish to express our gratitude to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen for their efforts to reach a positive solution conducive to strengthening the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The gratitude of the international community for the important role played by the Security Council in containing many regional conflicts and civil wars in recent years has highlighted the urgent need to change and increase the Council's role in line with a new concept — democratic representation, reflecting the greater balance in international relations — through the reform and expansion of its membership. This is one of the priority issues for States after the end of the cold war.

Although there is international unanimity on the need to reform the composition of the Council as part of the overall process of United Nations reform, the debate has nevertheless highlighted some differences between Member States with regard to the best way to implement the desired reforms. The agreement that has been reached in principle in the Working Group may be considered an appropriate basis for continuing serious negotiations between States to enable us to create a realistic vision reflecting the changes in the contemporary world and the need for democracy, justice and transparency, while ensuring that Council enlargement and other reforms will not have a negative impact on the Council's work or on its task of maintaining international peace and security.

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates supports the positive proposals submitted by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement to the General Assembly, which, *inter alia*, stressed that the expansion of the Security Council should not result in an increase in the number of permanent members from developed countries at the expense of the developing countries, but that the principle of equitable geographical representation should be respected, as well as the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

The attainment of that goal requires the international community to find an appropriate objective formula to give the developing countries, which represent the majority of the Member States of the United Nations, the opportunity of participating in processes for decision-making and for working out general strategies to meet current needs so as to serve the goals of peace and security.

Reform, and the formalization of the working methods of the Council, can realistically be brought about only if we consider the entire decision-making process, which is still, to this day, characterized by two main practices: consultations and the use of the veto. These practices have created double standards in some of the Council's work. There has been a lack of transparency with regard to attaining the general goal of peace. As the issues that the Council deals with are extremely important — they relate directly to peace and the interests of the countries concerned — the delegation of the United Arab Emirates supports all the efforts and initiatives that seek to expand the basis on which consultations take place between members and non-members of the Council, as well as regional organizations and other countries concerned, before decisions are taken.

We must also find objective criteria for the use of the veto to ensure that appropriate decisions are taken for the maintenance of international peace and security, fully

respecting the sovereignty of States and their territorial integrity, security and stability in accordance with international law and the provisions of the Charter. The delegation of the United Arab Emirates emphasizes the need for an objective, general assessment of the principle of Council enlargement in keeping with equitable geographical representation. We must also introduce reforms in the rules and practices of the Council in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Charter, as well as with Article 23.

As security and political problems are directly tied to economic and social issues, the international community should enhance coordination between the Security Council and the other main organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, so as to ensure their effective participation through political and legal consultations to enable a flow of information between them. This would promote confidence-building for the resolution of conflicts and situations of aggression through peaceful means, thereby creating a climate of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

In conclusion, the delegation of the United Arab Emirates hopes that discussions in the Working Group will be successful, and that consensus will be reached so that the Security Council can play its role and shoulder increased responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, security and stability.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council began its work, different aspects of Security Council reform have been considered. In its very difficult and delicate task, the Working Group was guided by the tireless efforts of the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Group, to whom my delegation would like to pay tribute.

In previous years, and during the various meetings of the Working Group, many delegations, including my own, have expressed their positions and offered proposals on the reform of the Council. The report of the Working Group to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, contained in document A/50/47, reflects the thrust of the Group's deliberations. This is not, therefore, the time to repeat what we have already said in the meetings of the Working Group. Having said that, I should like to state that my delegation wishes to express support for the observations made by the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The need for the Council to be more representative and much more transparent, effective, accountable to Member States and democratic is a given. Furthermore, the establishment of a new balance between the General Assembly and the Security Council by filling the existing gap between Member States and the Council is vital. The Council should ensure the participation of Member States in the decision-making process so that its moral legitimacy may be fully retained.

Of equal importance is the view of the large majority of Member States that there is a need to curtail and rationalize the veto power, for it is now more clear than ever before that that privilege has really lost its *raison d'être*. In our view, it is now time to appraise the past and prepare the ground for progress in the future deliberations of the Working Group, which is to continue its work.

My delegation believes that the discussions on the reform of the Security Council have so far been useful. The discussions on the issue in the Working Group and other forums have, to a large extent, clarified various aspects of the question on the agenda, delineating both convergences and divergences of views. It is now evident that progress in Security Council reform depends to a large extent on strong political will on the part of all Members, and particularly the permanent members of the Council.

On the other hand, the discussions to date have revealed some of the flaws and deficiencies of the Council, especially in its working methods. Some of those flaws have been inherent in the Council since its creation. In response to the discussions held, the Security Council has taken some incremental steps to improve its working methods. Those steps should be institutionalized and further initiatives should be taken in light of the suggestions and proposals introduced by Member States to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council.

There is general agreement that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded to ensure equitable and balanced representation. At the present time, the developing countries are under-represented. To make the Council more representative, various proposals have been introduced, each representing a philosophical viewpoint and/or the interests of certain Members. Unlike

the question of reform of the Council's working methods, which has met with only sporadic opposition from some of the permanent members of the Council, the question of increase in the membership of the Council is more complex and controversial. The emergent view, which seems to point to a way out of this dilemma, is to proceed to an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council as the first phase of this process. Of course, the discussions on the second phase — that is, other issues in Cluster I — should continue until a final result is achieved.

As the organ on which the Member States have conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council's decisions affect every Member of the Organization in one way or another. Therefore, the process of the Council's decision-making and the composition of its decision-makers are of paramount importance to Member States. Similarly, the participation of all Members in the process of the Council's reform is both important and a source of credibility for the Organization as a whole. For its part, my delegation is ready to continue to follow and to participate in the future work on the reform of the Security Council with a great deal of interest and enthusiasm.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the countries of Central America participating in this debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. We participate because we are a group of small countries that belong to a region that is not sufficiently represented in the Council and we feel a responsibility to express our position on what the Security Council should be in the next century.

The report of the Working Group before us is of fundamental importance because it affords us an opportunity to analyse and evaluate the prevailing consensus on a considerable number of the points we have been discussing for a long time now.

The Central American delegations wish to express their appreciation to the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group and to take this opportunity to note that the Group's mandate has been satisfactorily implemented. This year, considerable progress has been achieved. We have all had an opportunity to express our views in the Working Group and our hopes to arrive at a truly representative Security Council, one that, in addition to fulfilling its mandate to examine issues that pose a threat to international peace and security, will be possessed of effective, dynamic and transparent working methods and function in coordination with both the General Assembly and the other organs of the United Nations.

For Central America, which has in the past benefited from the work of the Security Council, in coordination with the General Assembly and other United Nations organs, it is of singular importance that the membership of the Security Council be enlarged. As the report notes, the Council must reflect the opinion of the vast majority of States, including those of our region, and there must be an increase in both permanent and non-permanent membership. Here, we would emphasize the right of developing countries to be represented in both the permanent and non-permanent memberships of the Council in order to maintain an overall balance in its membership.

A balanced increase in Security Council membership has become imperative. If it is not accomplished before the twenty-first century, we will not have acted in keeping with the new composition of the United Nations or with the changes demanded by the new world situation. As we see it, Article 23 of the Charter remains fully valid, because it contains a broad and flexible approach that accurately reflects the importance of the equitable geographical balance and distribution that should prevail in the Organization.

We believe that the cards are now on the table and that the time has now come to pursue serious and constructive negotiations. We are sure that the voices of all the Member States that have participated throughout these years of work cannot continue to be ignored by the five permanent members of the Council and we are persuaded that their response to all of this endeavour will be positive.

In recent years, the work of the Security Council has grown in tandem with the number of conflicts it has examined. This has demonstrated the relevance of a Council that, when taking its decisions, must be sure that it possesses all the elements of analysis and opinion that will enable it to act in accordance with the Charter, with due respect for the sovereignty and integrity of States and on behalf of the peoples of the world, as set forth in the Charter.

The United Nations has its roots in the immediate past, the end of the Second World War, and was established to avoid another armed conflict of equal or greater proportions. Its fundamental objectives depend on

the unity of the great Powers and on their responsibility for the establishment of world peace, security and order. Nonetheless, the founders of the Organization did not foresee the magnitude and scope of the conflict between two antagonistic blocs or the influence it would have on international relations in the post-war period; the structure, financing and strength of the United Nations were based on the criteria of the security, power and national interests of the great Powers. This was most particularly reflected in the composition of the Security Council, which was seen as the Organization's focal point.

The Security Council was formally granted broad powers to extend its mandate in the face of any threat to international peace and security, giving the impression that the principle of collective security is a reality. Unfortunately, however, the confrontational nature of great-Power relations and the demand for privileges in order to realize divergent objectives and interests revealed a different reality. The Council fell captive to power politics, regrettably consecrated in Article 27 of the Charter, a contradiction of Article 2, paragraph 1, which established the principle of the sovereign equality of States. This situation has prevailed in the United Nations ever since its creation.

Today, with an increase in the membership of the United Nations to 185 and as a result of the profound changes in international society, there has been a movement among Member States regarding the need to expand the Council so that it reflects not only the increase in the membership of the United Nations but also other questions related to its functioning. The goal is to strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, democratize its decisions and improve its relations with States that do not belong to the Council.

In this globalized and interdependent world, an increase in the membership of the Council should be based on Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Charter, which stipulates that

> "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

We therefore consider it vitally important that the reform be the result of broad political consensus that reflects the will of the majority. Taking this into account, Central America believes that the decision-making process in the Council should be one of the fundamental aspects of any comprehensive reform.

The Council acts on the basis of Article 24 of the Charter, which clearly specifies that its primary responsibility is to take action when international peace and security are threatened. It is in deciding whether a situation really constitutes a threat to international peace and security that the Security Council must act with great caution and that it must make a very careful analysis of the situation. We have the impression — and this worries us — that in this decision-making process the Security Council has fallen into a dangerous generalization as to what constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Practice has shown that now that we turn more frequently to the Council to seek solutions to any conflict, often other mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes, which Chapter VI of the Charter makes available, are forgotten. Central America — which has made full use of all political and diplomatic negotiating methods, and which has turned to the International Court of Justice and international law to resolve its differences and to find solutions to all sorts of regional problems — considers that such options should be given priority before deciding to establish any peacekeeping operation.

Central America has been following the work of the Working Group and therefore appreciates the contents of the report it has submitted to us recently. There are certain proposals or positions annexed to the report that the Group felt should be taken into consideration by the General Assembly. In that connection, we welcome the Non-Aligned Movement's annex on the question of the veto. Central America, like the great majority of Members, is of the opinion that at the present time the veto has lost its *raison d'être* and that ideally it should be completely eliminated. Nonetheless, realistically, since it would be extremely difficult to achieve that, we believe that the Non-Aligned Movement's proposal offers a viable alternative which should be given great attention by this Assembly. In this respect, we agree with those who have made concrete proposals to restrict the veto to Chapter VII. And once again we express the opinion of Central America that the effectiveness of the Council in fulfilling its mandate depends to a great extent on the legitimacy of its decisions. The use of the veto limits the Council's responsibility when it acts on behalf of all Members of the United Nations.

Central America welcomes this debate, which is devoted to the analysis of a subject that has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for some years now. This exercise is one of the most important in the entire

process of reform and strengthening of the United Nations. We therefore hope that through this process an effective contribution will be made to adapting the United Nations to the changing international system. We hope that the Security Council will thus respond to the aspirations of those who signed the Charter of the United Nations, which is the source of the commitment to maintain peace in a collective manner and not for the benefit or in the interest of any State in particular. This will be possible if we create a renewed Council which responds to the interests of all Member States in accordance with the ideals set forth in the Charter.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that Council reform is just one of the elements of the intricate process of United Nations reform, and that it should not be accomplished to the detriment of other key aspects that are also of global interest. In this process we can unhesitatingly affirm that, in the universe of difficulties confronting us, the problems of comprehensive and sustainable development are our greatest challenge because of their close links to international peace, security and progress. Peace, development and security are three concepts that are totally interdependent and that reinforce each other. For this reason, the process of reform must not detract from the due importance to be given to an analysis of development issues and to the solution of the serious, related problems. In this connection, it is important to maintain a balance between efforts to reform the Security Council and other initiatives to make the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council more effective as well as to strengthen cooperation for development.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): The reform of the Security Council has been the subject of our consideration for the last three years. During that time, an Open-ended Working Group has carried out deliberations on the matter. The Group has been unable to come up with definitive proposals for the reform of the Council. Nevertheless, the Group was able to agree on a number of areas that should be addressed in any reform programme. The Group reaffirmed its agreement that the Council should be expanded to ensure equitable geographical distribution, taking into account the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations — especially the increased membership of developing countries — as well as important changes in international relations. Views on the nature of the expansion differed. There was also a divergence of opinion on the veto power exercised by permanent members, and on the working methods of the Security Council.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Working Group for its work and for its report. The fact that the Group was unable to come up with definite and concrete proposals is not surprising. The issue is a delicate and sensitive one and lies at the very heart of international relations and the nexus of the global political power structure.

Fiji's position on the question of the enlargement of the Security Council is well known. We support an increase in the permanent as well as in the non-permanent membership of the Council. Since 1965, when the membership of the present Council was last reviewed, there have been profound changes in the international geopolitical situation arising from the success of the decolonization process and the end of the cold war era. Membership of the United Nations has increased steadily over the years to a total of 185 as of today. Regrettably, no corresponding change has been made to the composition of the Council to address the present inequities in the representation and geographic distribution of its membership.

My own country, Fiji, has been a Member of the United Nations for the last 26 years, since it became independent in 1970. For the last 18 years, we have contributed troops and civilian policemen to a majority of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Unfortunately, as a small Pacific island country on the fringe of the Asian Group to which we belong at present, Fiji is one of the 77 Member States that are still denied the opportunity to serve in the Council because of the absence of an equitable rotation system.

Fiji was the first South Pacific island country to join the United Nations, in 1970, five years after the membership of the present Council was revised. Today, there are 14 independent sovereign island States in the Pacific region, 8 of which are Members of the United Nations. In addition, there are seven overseas and Non-Self-Governing Territories in the region. Those 14 Pacific island nations have formed a regional organization with Australia and New Zealand for economic and political cooperation, known as the South Pacific Forum. Our total population is well over 25 million, making it a significant subregional group by itself. As a regional organization, the Forum enjoys observer status with the United Nations. In the same way that the Caribbean is recognized as a distinct subregion of the Latin American regional group, the South Pacific would like to be recognized as a distinct subregion of the Asian group. This distinct identity is not new and is already recognized in the United Nations

system by the new designation adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

It is therefore the humble submission of my country that, based on the United Nations principles of the sovereign equality of all its Members, of universality of membership, and of equitable geographical representation, the South Pacific region, which includes the island nations along with Australia and New Zealand, should be recognized as a geopolitical region for the purpose of regional representation and membership of the Security Council. The breakup of the former Soviet Union following the end of the cold war also gave rise to a dramatic increase in the membership of the Eastern European group. Any expansion of the Council should therefore take into account this new political reality.

In order to address the current imbalanced regional representation and to ensure broader representation of developing countries in the Council, my delegation would like to propose that the non-permanent membership of the Council be increased from 10 to 17, as follows: Africa and Asia, an increase from the present five to nine; Eastern Europe, from the present one to two; Latin America and the Caribbean, from the present two to three; and Western European and other States, from the present two to three.

In keeping with the principle of equitable geographical and regional representation, my delegation would further propose the following geographical distribution of these non-permanent seats. Within the African group, one seat each could be allocated to southern Africa, western Africa, eastern Africa, central Africa and the League of Arab States. Within the Asian group, one seat each could be allocated to South Asia, West Asia, East Asia, and the South Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand. Within the Latin American group, one seat each could be allocated to South America, Central America and the Caribbean. Finally, the group of Western European and other States could be allocated three seats and the Eastern European group could be allocated two seats. This would make a total of 17 non-permanent seats.

While we respect the right of each region and subregion to decide how these non-permanent seats should be distributed among their membership, my delegation believes that the only way to ensure an equitable and wider representation of the membership is through the adoption by regions and subregions of an equitable rotation system. We also support the retention of the ban on immediate re-election.

My delegation supports the proposal that the permanent membership of the Council be increased by two, and that the two additional seats should be taken up by Germany and Japan. We would also be prepared to support consideration of one permanent seat each for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean in order to make the group of permanent members more representative. However, for the permanent seats, we believe that in addition to the criteria in the Charter, the principal consideration should be the political, economic and diplomatic weight of the Member State concerned.

My delegation believes that our proposals on the size of the permanent membership and on the size and geographical composition of the non-permanent membership are a material and proper approach to the reform of the Security Council if the Council is to continue to have credibility as an institution which is representative of the international community as a whole and which therefore has the legal and moral authority to act on its behalf. It cannot claim to be such an organization if it continues to be a club of permanent members and those non-permanent members who have a lock on Council seats, getting themselves re-elected repeatedly while denying the opportunity to others from their regional groups.

On the matter of the veto, my delegation is of the view that the veto power should be eliminated. However, taking into account the current realities of international relations, my delegation would support, as an initial step in that direction, the proposal that the scope and use of the veto should be limited and should apply only to measures taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

My delegation additionally wishes to propose that if a permanent member uses the veto power outside the scope of Chapter VII of the Charter, the use of that veto should be subject to the right of appeal by another permanent Council member to the General Assembly for a final decision; the decision of the General Assembly on the appeal should be on the basis of a two thirds majority vote.

My delegation supports the view that rationalization of the working methods and an increase in the transparency of the work of the Council would enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, especially in terms of a sound working relationship with the other organs of the United Nations, and a new constructive relationship between the Council and the General Assembly which should include the effective flow of information and the

exchange of views. We therefore support the proposals submitted by Argentina and New Zealand and set out in document A/50/47/Add.1.

The fact is undeniable that almost all United Nations Members agree that the Council be reformed. Where we disagree is on the scope of the reform. My delegation has conveyed specific proposals. My delegation believes that with goodwill on the part of all, with a willingness to compromise, and with political will, we should be able to reach a consensus on the scope of the reform of the Security Council without undue delay.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me pleasure to express our sincere thanks to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. I wish also to thank the Vice-Chairmen for their excellent efforts in guiding the work of the Group last year. We are confident that the skills and the experience of the current Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Razali Ismail, will qualitatively contribute to the work of the Group.

Over the past three years, discussions in the Working Group have reflected a consensus on the importance of the expansion of the Security Council and on the need for a review of its working methods and procedures. With regard to expansion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm the joint position of the Non-Aligned Movement: that the enlargement of the Security Council should be comprehensive, reflecting the universal character of the international Organization, and that it is important substantially to increase the number of Council seats for the Non-Aligned Movement, and for the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Any attempt to exclude the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement from the process of expansion of the membership would be totally unacceptable.

As for the issue of the reform of the working methods and procedures of the Security Council, we believe that this issue is increasingly important for all Members of the United Nations, because such reform would act as a safety valve, ensuring that the Council responsibly carries out its duties under the Charter and preventing misuse of the Council's powers by some of its members.

Regrettably, however, we have noticed that in the Working Group's discussions last year there was an increasing tendency to focus on the question of the enlargement and expansion of the Council at the expense of the issue of reforming its methods and procedures. We believe that the reform of procedures and working methods was not given its due in the discussions of the Working Group, where proposals for reform were restricted to specific points, such as limitations on the veto and the question of lax interpretation and misuse of various Articles of the Charter, such as Articles 27, 31 and 32.

Such proposals, although important, are not the only ones that could enable us to overcome the deficiencies in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. It is true that the veto has been misinterpreted and misused, and it is true that Articles 27, 31 and 32 of the Charter have not been translated into a working method of the Security Council in conformity with the spirit of the Charter.

However there are other articles that have become inoperative, or have been misinterpreted — or have perhaps been used as a cover for practices that contravene the purposes of the Charter.Article 41 has been used by some members of the Security Council as if it were a blank cheque, a licence to impose comprehensive sanctions, as was the case with Iraq. Article 50 remains inoperative, despite the request by many countries to activate it. Article 23 is ignored by some Member States, which act in the Security Council on the basis of the narrow political views of their countries.

A number of the articles in Chapter VI relating to the pacific settlement of disputes remain inoperative because some members have an interest in jumping directly to action under Chapter VII. This was used as a pretext to destroy vital facilities in Iraq and to drop 120,000 tons of explosives.

If we pursue this line of thought, we reach a single conclusion: there is a need for a comprehensive approach to reforming all aspects of the working methods of the Security Council and to overcoming ambiguities, generalities and subjective interpretations of the articles of the Charter that establish the powers and the duties of the Security Council. Such interpretations have resulted in double standards in practices and criteria, and selectivity in application, which has harmed the credibility of the Council and of the United Nations.

In order to attain this comprehensive reform we should give priority to the following objectives: prohibiting the use of the Security Council as a tool for

the foreign policy of any particular State; confirming the international responsibility of the members of the Council; putting an end to the Security Council's encroachment on the prerogatives of the General Assembly and the other organs of the United Nations; restricting the use of the weapon of the veto in preparation for its elimination; and giving Member States the right to question the Security Council with regard to its resolutions, either in the General Assembly or at the International Court of Justice, in order to ascertain their legitimacy and legality.

Furthermore, States that are non-members of the Council should be informed of the lengthy deliberations that lead to serious resolutions, and those Member States should participate in the decisions, as outlined in the Charter. There should be a further strengthening of the principle of democracy, transparency and accountability in the Security Council and its bodies. We should strengthen the Security Council's commitment to the principles of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes and limit its resort to the mechanisms of Chapter VII. We should place the mechanisms and procedures under Chapter VII under strict control and affirm that there should be no resort to compulsory procedures unless they are justified. We should prevent the Security Council from using such procedures to starve peoples and to attack States.

To attain these objectives, we believe that the relevant articles of the Charter concerning the Security Council should be reviewed, and that the duties and obligations of the Security Council under Article 24 of the Charter — which states that the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations in carrying out its duties — should be precisely and clearly defined. Such work does not have to start from square one; a number of valuable views and opinions have resulted from the work of the various United Nations working groups, such as the Informal Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on An Agenda for Peace. Important views and proposals have been made by the subgroup on the question of United Nations-imposed sanctions, under the chairmanship of His Excellency the Ambassador of Brazil. The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization has arrived at very useful conclusions during the past few years, as has the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

All these and other important views and proposals could prove a very useful and enriching contribution to the work of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, and engender confidence in a review of the United Nations Charter in accordance with Article 109. By taking such proposals into consideration, we would guarantee the success of our efforts at comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's deep satisfaction with and confidence in the exemplary manner in which the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Jayanama of Thailand have, with great patience, guided our deliberations in the Working Group.

The debate on this agenda item within the Open-ended Working Group, created for the purpose of studying methods of reforming the Security Council, has elicited a number of divergent views. It would appear, judging from some of the diametrically opposed positions adopted by certain delegations, that our painstakingly slow progress thus far on the various issues under discussion may be hampered even further if these maximalist positions continue to be espoused.

It would seem that the diversity in the agenda of the Working Group, ranging from the composition and size of an enlarged Security Council, its decision-making process and working methods to other matters related to the Council, is perhaps a little too ambitious. This may well be a contributing factor to the limited progress that has been achieved to date.

While we have proceeded on the basis that progress on the various issues before us should proceed concurrently, but that progress on certain issues should not be impeded by the lack of progress in other areas, the reality of the matter is that this has not transpired in practice. This, we believe, is in part due to the positions that some of the five permanent members have adopted on matters under discussion other than the composition and size of the Security Council.

We are all aware that during our deliberations on the issue of decision-making in the Council during the past session, the permanent five have remained steadfastly opposed to any proposal to curtail the use of the veto, one of them going as far as to state that it was not even prepared to submit the veto for negotiation or to put it to a vote in any forum.

On the issue of the working methods, we heard proposals aimed at improving the transparency of the Council's working methods, such as the very sensible

proposals relating to the broader interpretation of Articles 31 and 32, in order that they should also apply to informal consultations of the Security Council. Again we heard the permanent five argue that, since no formal decisions can be taken during these discussions, Articles 31 and 32 are not applicable to these private gatherings.

In this manner, a legitimate appeal for greater transparency in the working methods of the Council was construed by the permanent five as excessively harsh criticism, thus resulting in a reaction that has all the makings of over-protectiveness.

Similarly, suggestions for a periodic review of the permanent membership category of the Security Council drew the reaction that this principle would amount to an indictment of failure against a permanent member. Yet this argument leaves much to be desired, and is certainly not conducive to attaining the ultimate aim of the exercise that we are engaged in, which is specifically that of reforming the Security Council, within the overall context of modernizing the United Nations Organization.

This near stalemate on issues other than that of increasing the membership of the Council has been reached in the face of overwhelming support for a review on these issues by the membership of the Organization.

Our ambitious agenda can well be a challenge rather than an obstacle if we as Member States display the necessary flexibility. In this regard, certain permanent members have come out openly in support of a selective increase in the size of the Council, yet they are holding the process in the Working Group to ransom by refusing to engage in a substantive discussion of the other issues relating to Council reform. In the opinion of my delegation, this approach of impeding progress on certain issues contradicts the principle adopted by the Working Group relating to the constructive discussion of the issues before it and will unnecessarily protract our debate.

The proposals relating to improving the transparency, accountability and legitimacy of the Security Council as previously put forward by the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as a number of innovative proposals submitted during our most recent session, deserve immediate and thorough consideration.

My delegation wishes to call upon the permanent five to identify clearly those issues on which they are not prepared to enter into a substantive debate and to favour the Working Group with reasons as to why this is the case. By the same token, an indication by them as to the issues on which they are prepared to display flexibility would also be helpful, in order that the modalities for future negotiations can be established at an early stage as a way of speeding up and thus shortening our debate on these aspects.

Our discussions on the issue of size and composition of an enlarged Council during the last session were both diverse and fruitful.

On this issue, my delegation believes that the principles governing the possible expansion of both membership categories of the Security Council, as well as the criteria for new membership, still require our further attention. While we have, thus far, reached consensus in the Working Group that any expansion in the Security Council should ensure equitable geographical distribution, taking into account the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries, as well as important changes in international relations, we also need to admit that we have a long way to go in our further definition of these broad terms of agreement.

We are all acutely aware of the fact that there were prevailing historical circumstances at the time which deprived the authors of the Charter of the opportunity of laying down criteria for permanent membership. However, we are also aware that, in the event that there is agreement that this category of membership should be increased, this is one distinct area where more intense deliberation is needed, particularly when viewed in terms of the responsibilities which we as Member States assign to Security Council membership.

Similarly, changed global circumstances may necessitate a revision regarding the criteria for new non-permanent members, this being a category where there already appears to be a broad consensus that membership should increase.

My delegation has followed with interest the introduction in the debate of the various models involving permutations of membership in both categories, which also attempt to take into account the issues relating to regional considerations, equitable geographical distribution, the increase in the membership of the developing countries, as well as important changes in international relations. We believe that a comprehensive discussion of the common denominators within these models, as well as those that may still be proposed during

the present session, should be weighed within the context of the questions relating to the criteria and modalities for the selection of new Security Council members.

In short, we believe that, bearing in mind that any increase in the membership of the Security Council should not impair the efficiency and effectiveness of its work, issues related to appropriate candidates, as well as those of specific numbers, are of secondary importance to our debate at this stage. These should follow as the logical next step once we have reached agreement on the overriding concerns relating to criteria and modalities for the election of new members of the Security Council.

We cannot deny the fact that our deliberations on this agenda item have dragged on for too long. During his address to the General Assembly at the beginning of this session, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo registered South Africa's disappointment with the slow pace of progress in our debate on this subject. In this regard, my delegation would support any initiatives aimed at setting time-frames within the debate for the finalization of the various issues, within the context of the overall set of Security Council reform issues as entrusted to the Working Group by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, allow me to assure you of my delegation's continued cooperation with regard to our deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish):* The Peruvian delegation considers it essential to express its special gratitude to the co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand, for their tireless efforts and their valuable contributions to the progress of the Working Group.

Peru will continue to participate responsibly, realistically and flexibly in the negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. It will assess each question on its own merits and place the fundamental principles and spirit of the Charter above the strategic and political interests of large and medium-sized regional Powers. In spite of the natural complexity of the issues, progress has been made during the deliberations: although the report has avoided making major formulations, there are important trends of opinion giving structure to issues that we now want to see put up for negotiation and decision.

The negotiations are complex because, unlike the reform of the Security Council in 1963, which was decided upon after several years of negotiation, we are now talking about an increase in the category of permanent membership, which has opened up discussion on, *inter alia*, access to the special prerogatives of the five permanent members.

First of all, we believe that the strengthening of the Security Council does not mean just an increase in the number of its members. In our opinion, the Council will be strengthened when its decisions are taken in strict conformity with the law and not subject to narrow interests.

We also believe that reform needs to be comprehensive because it must cover every constituent aspect of the Security Council. This is intended not to affect its effectiveness but to strengthen its legitimacy.

On a number of occasions, we have expressed our position on an increase in the permanent membership through the inclusion of two developed countries and three developing countries, one from each of the three regions of the southern hemisphere. In accordance with Article 23 of the Charter, they must all be able to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security and at the same time, their incorporation into the Council must respect equitable geographical distribution. Equally important, however, is the reference in that same Article to the contribution that these States must make to the purposes of the Charter.

We have maintained that contribution to the United Nations does not mean just financial or military contribution. Due regard must be paid to contributions to international political, economic and social agreements because these represent progress towards the objectives set out in the various Articles of the Charter. Along the same lines, we also believe that having policies that are historically consistent with the Charter of the United Nations is a fundamental qualification for any country that aspires to be a permanent member of the Security Council.

One of the issues that the Working Group has to resolve is whether new members should be admitted on a rotating basis. Another important proposal, the Italian proposal, tries to ensure an opportunity for all States to join the Council. In principle, this would seem to meet the largest number of legitimate aspirations. However, if we were to choose the rotation alternative, we could be

moving away from the principle of consistency with the Charter and compliance with its provisions.

We also believe that an expansion of non-permanent membership should preserve an equitable ratio in terms of decision-making and that in order to preserve the democratic principle of access to non-permanent membership in the Security Council, we would need to consider the appropriateness of suspending the prohibition of immediate re-election contained in the Charter.

The Working Group's report describes in considerable detail decisions that have been taken or proposals made on the Council's working methods relating to transparency, which is seen as essential to the interests of non-members. It is important to consolidate these measures so that they are not discretionary. It is important for some of them, such as consultations and briefings held with countries involved in matters dealt with by the Council, to be timely and precede deliberations so that they can have an impact on the decisions taken by the Council.

But above all, it is important to note that improvements in the Council's working methods must not result in negotiations taking the place of the important substantive decisions that have to be taken on expanding the membership of the Council and improving the decision-making machinery.

The non-use of the veto when one of the Powers was involved in a dispute was a cause that was fervently defended by President Roosevelt in Dumbarton Oaks and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and the proposal to admit the veto only for procedural issues was supported by his successor, Secretary of State Stettinius. Some years later, in 1949, the General Assembly adopted resolution 267 (III) which recommended to the members of the Security Council that they consider a set of decisions related to it to be of a procedural nature.

An extreme form of the veto demanded by the former Soviet Union, on which the Organization's existence depended towards the end of the San Francisco Conference, was seen by Stalin as a banal matter. This, nonetheless, was what gave rise to the compromise formula that is reflected in the Charter. But this had to be adopted by vote: 20 in favour, 10 against and 10 abstentions. For years, this has been a manifestation of compromise in the area of strategic security.

I have taken the liberty of making these references because the veto is present throughout the Charter, and as regards reform, as has been stated by the delegation of Mexico, this is the major obstacle facing the Working Group — even greater than the expectations for agreements that need to be taken by the countries of the three regions of the southern hemisphere to participate as permanent members, an aspiration that almost all Members agree should receive a positive response.

It is clear that the declining use of the veto in the post-cold-war period must reflect a reality. However, it has not ensured the effectiveness of the Security Council in critical cases. Often, a sort of hidden veto has made consensus possible only on ambiguous, diluted or reiterative texts. For this reason, it is important to reaffirm the authority of the Council and, of course, of the Organization. It is also important to bear in mind that the powers of the Council are rooted in the Charter and cannot be inconsistent with what is provided for therein; and in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 2, in discharging its duties, the Security Council shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. This is an indication that the political decisions of the Council, which are a priority, are bound by international law as contained in the Charter.

In keeping with the spirit of realism with which we need to consider the prerogative of the veto, the report contains important proposals by countries or groups of countries to make certain changes in this power, such as the proposal made by Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the one made by Brazil. We support these proposals and those calling for the double veto.

These are noteworthy references because the Working Group was notified that the question of the veto was not negotiable. This notification is significant because it implies that two developed countries that are explicitly supported as permanent members by the five current Powers, and developing countries that aspire to this status, would constitute a subordinate class of member States, in accordance with norms that could not be changed because of all the above-mentioned reasons.

Finally, the brief reference contained in the report on the important question of periodic reviews of the composition and membership of the Security Council should be aimed at adapting the package of reforms to

international realities, but it should not be used to justify an agreement that is partial and incomplete in exchange for its regular review.

The Acting President: There are no more speakers in the debate on this item.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 47.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to announce some additions to the programme of work of the General Assembly which appeared in document A/INF/51/3/Rev.l/Add.l. On Monday, 4 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 129, 129 and 140 (a), 134 and 157 following the consideration of agenda item 23, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee".

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.50

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

50th plenary meeting
Monday, 4 November 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 23

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/360)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.13)

The President: I call on the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.13.

Mr. Goco (Philippines): As Chairman of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), I have the honour and privilege to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", contained in document A/51/L.13. The sponsors of the draft resolution are China, Cyprus, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda and the Philippines. Since the issuance of the draft resolution, the following States have also become sponsors: Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan.

In the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, the General Assembly states that it has considered the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/360, and notes with satisfaction the progress achieved towards enhancing cooperation between the United Nations system and the AALCC, particularly with regard to the programme of the United Nations Decade of International Law and programmes on environment and sustainable development.

It is pertinent to note that during the period under review, the secretariat of the AALCC organized, within the framework of the Consultative Committee at its thirty-fifth session, held in March 1996 in Manila, a special meeting on the proposed establishment of an international criminal court, which furnished a forum for an exchange of views on the draft statute prepared by the International Law Commission on that proposed international criminal court. I presided over that meeting. The following States are involved in the AALCC: Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, Arab Republic of Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates and Yemen Arab Republic. Botswana is an associate member; Australia and New Zealand have the status of permanent observers. With the exception of three or four, all these States participated in the meeting in March 1996.

A report on the proceedings of the special meeting was thereafter transmitted to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

International Criminal Court. The AALCC was represented at the first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee, and the AALCC secretariat will report thereon at the thirty-sixth session of the Consultative Committee, to be held at Tehran in 1997.

It may be recalled that a proposal for a periodic meeting of the legal advisers of the Member States to facilitate an informal exchange of views on contemporary problems and issues was first initiated and approved at the fifteenth session of the AALCC held in 1974 in Tokyo. Since then a number of meetings have been convened and have considered, *inter alia*, issues such as the organization of legal advisory services in member Governments, the jurisdictional immunities of States, the improvement of modalities of work before the Sixth Committee, promoting the wider use of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the implementation of multilateral conventions adopted under the auspices of the United Nations, the role of the ICJ in the peaceful settlement of environmental disputes, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, and joint ventures in and exploitation of seabed resources.

Representatives of as many as 42 States Members of the United Nations participated in a meeting of the legal advisers, convened by the AALCC at United Nations Headquarters here in New York on 9 October 1995. The President of the General Assembly was present, as was a Judge of the International Court of Justice, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the AALCC. They all addressed that meeting, over which I also presided.

On 14 November 1996, the AALCC will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of its constitution. The secretariat of the AALCC has now served the African and Asian States for 40 years, and will endeavour to continue to do so in the years ahead. To commemorate the fortieth anniversary, the secretariat will publish a special volume of essays on international law, with contributions from distinguished jurists, Government officials and representatives of international organizations. The proposed volume is now in press and we plan to release it on the constitution day of the AALCC on 14 November 1996.

In paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. It is therefore crucial for the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.13 by consensus.

Mr. de Silva (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka is privileged to have been associated with the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) since its inception. The AALCC has played an invaluable and historic role since the 1950s in creating a wider appreciation of international legal issues among the newly independent States of Asia and Africa, which were then emerging from long periods of colonial rule. It helped in the formulation and progressive development of the existing norms and principles of international law so as to take into account the political and economic needs and aspirations of the developing countries of Asia and Africa.

Over the years the Committee has made a unique contribution to the initiatives of the United Nations in the codification and progressive development of international law. The impact that the Committee made during the negotiations at the Third United Nations Conference of the Law of the Sea is a matter of record. Its contribution to the evolution of the concept of the exclusive economic zone in particular stands testimony to the invaluable role of the Committee in the creation of the new legal regime of the oceans. The Committee was also closely associated with the work of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and was actively engaged in the formulation of the legal instruments that emerged from this initiative, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General of the AALCC for his statement to the General Assembly, which outlined the steps taken by the Committee to ensure continuing and close cooperation between the two organizations. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which underlines the need to enhance such cooperation. These clearly reflect the fact that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee is continuing its efforts towards strengthening the role of the United Nations and its organs, particularly the International Law Commission and the International Court of Justice.

The programmes and initiatives recently undertaken by the AALCC deal with a range of issues that are both complex and of current relevance to Member States. At the recent Manila session of the Committee, a special meeting was devoted to the discussion of the draft statute of the proposed international criminal court. The

importance and complexity of the issues involved in this initiative require the widest possible participation of the countries of Asia and Africa in the preparatory work. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice, a seminar was convened in New Delhi with a view to promoting the wider use of the Court in the peaceful settlement of disputes. The AALCC is currently engaged in organizing, in association with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a workshop on refugee law which would deal with issues relating to the status and treatment of refugees and the question of internally displaced persons. Through such a work programme, focusing on legal issues of current relevance, the Committee strives to ensure that there is an Asian-African dimension in current international negotiations.

The Committee thus has a continuing and crucial role to play in these ongoing initiatives of the United Nations. As contemporary international law is called upon to meet new challenges in a post-cold-war era, the Committee must ensure that the interests of the Asian and African countries are duly reflected in the formulation of new legal norms and principles. This requires close and effective cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC.

Sri Lanka therefore welcomes all efforts to enhance the cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the AALCC. We are pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/51/L.13 and commend its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Chen Shiqiu (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Since its establishment 40 years ago, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) has become a significant and unique organization of an intergovernmental and regional nature in the international arena, while the number of its full member States has increased from 7 to the present 43. It not only serves as a forum where Asian and African countries undertake discussions, consultations and cooperation on legal issues and other questions of common concern, but also makes important contributions to the promotion of the progressive development and codification of international law, so that it better serves world peace and development.

The AALCC became an observer at the General Assembly in 1980. Since then, the two organizations have enjoyed ever closer cooperation. The Secretary-General's representative participates in the annual meeting of the AALCC every year, while the AALCC sends delegates to take part in a variety of meetings in the United Nations system, among them sessions of the General Assembly, the Sixth Committee, the International Law Commission (ILC), and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). In this way, the AALCC is actively participating in the examination of various matters within its area of concern and making positive contributions to them. The AALCC has made efforts to adjust its programme of work, to give priority consideration to matters of current concern at the United Nations, and it has taken initiatives to carry out activities with a view to enhancing the role of the United Nations.

It is particularly worth mentioning that the AALCC attaches special importance to cooperation with the ILC. Besides inviting the ILC Chairman to participate and introduce the Commission's work to its annual meeting every year, the AALCC makes the report of each session of the ILC a fixed agenda item under which a discussion is held and suggestions are made. Conversely, the Secretary-General of the AALCC attends each session of the ILC and introduces the work of the AALCC. We deem this cooperation fruitful and satisfactory.

The AALCC has been active in its efforts to promote a more extensive utilization of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and has produced a study in this regard. In January this year, it held a symposium in New Delhi on the topic of the operation and function of the ICJ, to commemorate the Court's fiftieth anniversary and to encourage members to strengthen its role.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/23, proclaimed 1990-1999 as the United Nations Decade of International Law. Responding favourably to this, the AALCC secretariat has prepared a document outlining a number of projects and pragmatic activities to be carried out during the Decade. The AALCC and the Government of Qatar co-sponsored the Qatar conference on international law, as a positive contribution to encourage wider appreciation of the principles of international law in countries of the Asian and African regions, and to promote the progressive development of international law.

The AALCC continues to follow closely the implementation of the various international instruments emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), especially the implementation of Agenda 21. It has taken part in many negotiations in the field of environment and development under the auspices of the United Nations and has studied carefully the relevant draft conventions, thus providing useful help to its members in various negotiations.

Recently, during its thirty-fifth annual session in March 1996, the AALCC organized a special meeting on the establishment of an international criminal court. The occasion provided a useful opportunity both for an exhaustive discussion on important questions relating to the establishment of the court and for furthering mutual understanding and cooperation on the matter among the member States.

In view of the above, it is satisfying for us to see the strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. We hope that the effective cooperation between the two organizations in the field of the gradual development and codification of international law and in other areas of common concern can be further enhanced so that a positive contribution can be made to the promotion of friendly cooperation among countries, the maintenance of world peace and security, common prosperity for all societies, and the achievement of a just and sound new international order based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the spirit of the Bandung Conference.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the work of the AALCC. Since becoming a full member in 1983, China has actively participated in all the annual sessions of the organization, and successfully hosted the twenty-ninth session in 1990. The Chinese Government will continue, as always, to give its full support to the work of the AALCC, and will do its share in furthering its role and influence and encouraging its closer cooperation with the United Nations.

Mr. Suamin (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", which is contained in document A/51/360. It provides an informative account of the activities of the Committee in the recent past.

It is fitting to recall that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) was a tangible outcome of the historic Bandung Conference that gave impetus to the legitimate aspiration and demand of the Asian and African peoples for the development of a more just and democratic international legal order. It was self-evident that if the law was to command respect of all nations, it had to take into account the views of developing countries, irrespective of differences in political, legal or social systems, and based on respect for sovereignty, integrity and non-interference. Indonesia, as one of the five founding members of the AALCC, takes great pride in the accomplishments of the Committee, especially its endeavours to promote acceptance and respect for the principles of international law.

During the course of the work of the AALCC, it has oriented its activities to complement the work of the United Nations, with a view to strengthening the role of the Organization. In this context, it has established close relations with the Organization and its various agencies engaged in the field of law and in economic and humanitarian matters. This culminated in the decision of the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session to accord observer status to the Consultative Committee, a distinction shared by few international organizations.

Following a series of consultations between United Nations and AALCC officials, a programme of cooperation has been established which identified the following specific areas: cooperative framework; representation at meetings and conferences; strengthening the role of the United Nations and the United Nations Decade of International Law; promoting wider use of the International Court of Justice; measures for the promotion of ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; international economic cooperation for development; other issues before the AALCC; and the fortieth anniversary of the AALCC.

We are gratified to note the degree and extent of cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC secretariat. Apart from the promotion of codification, the efforts of the AALCC have been devoted to the ratification process of United Nations conventions and treaties. In this regard, it has worked tirelessly to disseminate information and foster wider appreciation of international law among its member States. During the period under review, the AALCC was represented at many meetings and conferences, including among others the United Nations Congress on Public International Law, the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Expert Group Workshop on International Environmental Law Aiming at Sustainable Development, and the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

My delegation is of the view that the role of the AALCC should be further strengthened in the programme of the United Nations Decade of International Law. We

believe that the Decade provides a unique opportunity to enhance cooperation between the two organizations, particularly in the holding of seminars, workshops and scholarship programmes in conjunction with other specialized agencies, for the benefit of developing countries. We are also pleased to note that the AALCC organized a forum for an exchange of views on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The results of those deliberations proved useful to the sessions of the Preparatory Committee. My delegation is further gratified by the proposal to issue a special publication in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the AALCC.

As regards the promotion of the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Indonesia has consistently supported AALCC activities in this vital field. It was at the instance of Indonesia that in 1970 the AALCC rendered assistance to Asian and African States in the preparatory work for the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. We are pleased to note that the work of the Consultative Committee now includes promoting the effective participation of member States in the International Seabed Authority. In this context, its efforts are exerted towards the adoption of common policy and strategy for the interim period before the commercial exploitation of deep seabed mining becomes feasible.

In an era where trade barriers are down, the issue of international economic cooperation for economic development should be accorded primary importance. The identification of an international legal framework to promote such cooperation is indeed valuable. In this regard, the contribution of the AALCC in promoting the legal texts of United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has assisted member States in harmonizing rules of international trade law.

In addition, the close relations established between the two organizations have resulted in fruitful collaboration on many questions. In fostering the institution of arbitration, it adopted the integrated scheme for settlement of disputes, which has led to the establishment of regional arbitration centres in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Lagos. It was believed that trade and development in Asia and Africa would be enhanced with the creation of a climate of stability and confidence in economic transactions. Furthermore, the holding of the Conference on the Settlement of Energy, Petroleum and Gas Disputes by the AALCC Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration in Cairo in November 1994, in joint sponsorship with the World Bank, was yet another worthy endeavour in this field.

The consideration of the question of refugees is indeed timely when flashpoints of unrest persist throughout the world. It is in this context that my delegation is encouraged by the initiatives of the AALCC in the study of refugee law and its problems. By closely working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, it has held various seminars to raise the consciousness of the international community on the pertinent issues of legislation governing the treatment of refugees. Furthermore, it has recently drafted legislation on the rights and duties of refugees within the context of international law and State practices.

It is undeniable that the AALCC has played a significant role in harmonizing the views of the countries in the Asian-African region on the codification and development of international law. It has succeeded in formulating a common approach to some complex international legal issues. In an era of global interdependence, new vistas have opened up for the global community to work together in close cooperation as we strive for peace, justice and development. We remain confident that the AALCC will continue its service to its member States to realize those goals.

In conclusion, my delegation deems it a distinct pleasure to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/51/L.13) before us, entitled, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee".

Mr. Hayes (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

This occasion affords me the opportunity to acknowledge a process of cooperation which has grown from relatively modest beginnings in 1980 and has matured into the fruitful relationship we witness today. In so doing, I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/51/360, which faithfully records the landmarks in the history of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC). In 1981, to commemorate the Consultative Committee's twenty-fifth anniversary, the General Assembly requested the United Nations Secretary-General to hold

consultations with the Secretary-General of the Consultative Committee, with a view to further strengthening and widening the scope of cooperation between the two organizations. Fifteen years later, the Secretary-General's report is proof that the terms of the General Assembly's request have indeed been met.

In trying to select a particular aspect of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, the European Union is faced with a veritable *embarras de richesses*, as indeed was apparent from the statement of the Chairman of the Consultative Committee here this morning. Nevertheless, I feel that it is appropriate on this occasion to acknowledge the common interest of the Union and the Consultative Committee in the work of the United Nations Decade of International Law. The Union has followed with interest the Consultative Committee's efforts towards promoting wider use of the International Court of Justice, as well as its active participation in the ongoing debate on the establishment of an international criminal court. The European Union is grateful to the Consultative Committee for the measures it has taken towards the promotion of the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The European Union would like to lay stress on the Consultative Committee's important work in the area of international economic cooperation for development. In this regard, the Union notes that at its thirty-fourth session, the Consultative Committee urged its member States to take account of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law on Procurement of Goods, Construction and Services when reforming or enacting their legislation on procurement. The Consultative Committee also urged its member States to consider adopting or acceding to other proposals prepared by UNCITRAL. The European Union has also taken cognizance of the Consultative Committee's scheme for the settlement of disputes in economic and commercial transactions. In particular, the Union is pleased to note that regional arbitration centres have been established in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Lagos to assist in the promotion and implementation of UNCITRAL arbitration rules. The Union also notes with satisfaction that it is planned to establish a similar centre in Nairobi to serve eastern and southern Africa.

Finally, the European Union recalls with pleasure that, on the occasion of the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly, 42 legal advisers from United Nations Member States participated in a meeting convened by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee at the Headquarters of the United Nations. In so recalling, the European Union wishes in a sense to return the compliment by extending its best wishes to the Consultative Committee on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary. The Consultative Committee is marking this milestone by organizing a seminar and by publishing a collection of essays in the field of international law.

The European Union is of the view that these commemorative events are appropriately in keeping with the objectives of the United Nations Decade of International Law and with the proud tradition of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee.

Mr. Fathalla (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We are pleased to participate in the discussion on agenda item 23, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", particularly as the Consultative Committee is commemorating its fortieth anniversary. The AALCC has proven the importance of its work not only in coordinating the positions of its membership in Asia and Africa but also in engaging in studies and research, by which the Committee has contributed to the development of international law and in support of the role of the United Nations.

I think we should commend the Committee's capacity to adapt and to develop its work over the years to meet the needs of the international community and to keep pace with the present developments in the United Nations. Cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC is therefore extremely important.

The Secretary-General's report, contained in document A/51/360 of 16 September 1996, describes various forms of cooperation in different fields, covering joint consultation on issues of common interest and importance, the exchange of documents and information, and the determination of issues where the Committee can support the role of the international Organization. As a result, the AALCC has oriented its programme of work to give permanent priority to issues of interest to the United Nations. Among these issues is support for the role of the United Nations — and the Committee has indeed made a considerable contribution in this field, exemplified in its study entitled "Strengthening the role of the United Nations through rationalization of its functional modalities with special reference to the General Assembly" (A/40/726 and Corr.1, annex). That study contains a general evaluation of the performance of the United

Nations. We believe it has enriched the present discussion on the issue, which is one of the most pressing issues for the Organization.

The AALCC continues to adapt speedily in order to continue to support the United Nations. A recent example of this is described in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's report (A/51/360): the AALCC's holding of a special meeting in March 1996 on the establishment of an international criminal court. This was an important forum to exchange views informally on the work of the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. We believe that this is one of the most important issues before the United Nations today.

It is expected that the diplomatic conference for the establishment of the court will be held in mid-1998. In this connection, we feel that the meeting of the Consultative Committee to be held in Tehran in 1997 is important, for it will provide a further opportunity to coordinate positions and to follow up on the present negotiations in the Preparatory Committee. This would enable the AALCC to continue to provide the necessary support to the United Nations prior to the holding of the diplomatic conference to consider the statute of the court.

My delegation does not wish to enumerate here the advantages of supporting cooperation between the Committee and the United Nations, or to set out the various fields of cooperation; the report of the Secretary-General contains all these details. However, I shall note that in recent years there has been cooperation on international economic issues related to development, refugees and other important issues that are before the Organization.

I commend the role played by the regional arbitration centres, established by the AALCC in order to assist in strengthening the rules of arbitration established by United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, which is one of the important bodies of the United Nations. Egypt welcomes the steps now being taken by the AALCC to establish an arbitration centre in Nairobi to serve eastern and southern African countries. We hope this will very soon be the fourth centre, in addition to those operating in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur and Lagos.

I wish finally to say that Egypt will continue to support the AALCC, to promote continued cooperation between the AALCC and the United Nations, and to provide all necessary assistance to attain this objective.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his report on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", contained in document A/51/360.

Upholding justice and respect for the principles of international law are among the essential elements of a peaceful world as envisaged by the founders of the United Nations. In order to realize these lofty objectives, the Charter of the United Nations assigned the General Assembly a special role in the promotion of international cooperation and the encouragement of the progressive development and codification of international law. As a result, over the past 51 years, dozens of conventions and other international instruments regulating various aspects of relations among States have been developed under the auspices of the United Nations.

We in Asia and Africa — eager to play an active role in bringing the rule of law into inter-State relations and to participate in the process of the codification of international law and its progressive development — established the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee 40 years ago. This is an organization that is unique in those two regions. Since its inception, the AALCC has undertaken a number of studies in the field of international legal matters of common interest to the two continents. Moreover, it has functioned as an important forum for the exchange of views and information among its member States. It has played a significant role in exploring and harmonizing the needs, views and positions of African and Asian countries concerning various aspects of lawmaking at the international level.

A common objective, namely striving for the progressive development of international law and its codification, links the two organizations. It was this common aim that led to commencement of cooperation between the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and the United Nations immediately after the foundation of the AALCC in 1956, a cooperation that continues to this day and that has proven to be fruitful and constructive.

For instance, the AALCC has undertaken a systematic and consistent examination from Asian and African perspectives of items on the agendas of the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission. Its views and recommendations have proven useful to the

members of the Consultative Committee and, directly or indirectly, have been reflected in the proceedings of the lawmaking organs of the United Nations.

Cooperation between the AALCC and the United Nations has been consolidated and has found new dimensions in recent years. The Consultative Committee has included in its programme of projects and studies a number of important items that are on the agenda of the General Assembly, including those of the law of the sea, international protection of refugees, international economic cooperation, and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.

Moreover, the Secretary-General of the Consultative Committee or his representatives have participated in and addressed meetings of the Sixth Committee and other subsidiary bodies at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at United Nations offices in Europe. Representatives from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs have likewise participated in and addressed the annual meetings of the AALCC.

Significantly, cooperation between the two organizations is not limited to the lawmaking process alone and covers other fields as well. For instance, the Consultative Committee has undertaken studies to facilitate the ratification process of conventions, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and has taken initiatives to help the dissemination and wider appreciation of international law among its members. To this end, it has organized seminars and workshops in cooperation with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and other lawmaking bodies.

Through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/23, another avenue for cooperation between the two organizations has been opened, with the proclamation of the period 1990-1999 as the United Nations Decade of International Law.

Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this context, the Consultative Committee has regularly submitted its views on the program of activities for the Decade, and recently presented a report on the role it can play in this field, currently under consideration by the working group concerned. It has also carried out specific studies devoted to enhancing the role of the International Court of Justice, which is one of the objectives of the Decade of International Law. Last but not the least, the Consultative Committee participated actively in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the United Nations and, in 1996, organized a regional seminar to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice.

The report before the General Assembly illustrates in detail the very constructive cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC over the last two years. We feel that prospects for future cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee are bright. This is why the Islamic Republic of Iran, as host country to the next annual session of the Consultative Committee, has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, contained in document A/51/L.13, and expresses its hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): The role played by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) since its inception as a forum for consultation and cooperation between its members and as a channel for the exchange of information and experience with other regions has been most useful and productive. It is in recognition of this important role that 15 years ago the General Assembly, in its resolution 36/38 of 18 November 1981 requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to carry out consultations with the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee with a view to strengthening further and widening the scope of cooperation between the two organizations in certain areas of common concern.

By 1984, the AALCC had won the full confidence of the General Assembly, which adopted a resolution commending AALCC for orienting its programmes to strengthen its supportive role to the work of the United Nations in wider areas, and in 1987 drew up a further programme of cooperation, which identified several specific areas for cooperation between the two secretariats.

Kenya has had a long and productive association with the AALCC, and it is therefore with pleasure that I address the Assembly on behalf of the Kenya delegation to express our warm thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General and secretariat of the AALCC for their outstanding work in promoting interregional and international cooperation, supportive of the efforts of the United Nations, with a view to strengthening the role of the United Nations in the progressive development and

codification of international law as well as in economic and humanitarian matters.

As a developing country, Kenya highly values the many studies, workshops and seminars organized by the AALCC in areas of concern to African and Asian countries. The secretariat has maintained a high profile representation at United Nations-sponsored conferences, notably at negotiations for conventions emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and the law of the sea, to mention but a few. In that regard, my delegation looks forward to the contribution of the AALCC at the special session of the General Assembly to be convened for the purpose of an overall review of the implementation of Agenda 21.

It is particularly gratifying to note that AALCC members, determined to play a meaningful role in the ongoing work of the General Assembly, took the opportunity presented by the Manila session of the AALCC this year to focus attention on the question of the creation of an international criminal court. As an in-house forum for reviewing and exchanging views on the progress made so far on the draft statute of the international criminal court, the meeting proved very productive; it is our hope that given the complexity of issues involved, the AALCC will participate even more actively in future work.

We wish finally to appeal to States members of the AALCC to pay their outstanding contributions in full and on time in order that the organization may continue to serve its member States in their various fields of endeavour in collaboration with the United Nations.

Mr. Dev (India): India has had the privilege of hosting the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) in New Delhi since its inception. This underscores the importance we attach to the Committee and its work.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/360. The report deals in detail with the activities of cooperation undertaken between the United Nations and the Committee over the last year. My delegation underscores with particular interest and appreciation the activities of the AALCC in the economic, environmental and humanitarian areas of international law. The AALCC has been represented at several meetings and conferences of the United Nations relating to international law. Specific mention may be made in this connection of the participation of the AALCC in the historic United Nations Congress on Public International Law held in the General Assembly Hall.

The annual session of the AALCC, held at Manila in March 1996, was a significant event. It was attended at high level by representatives of member States and of interested observer States. Particularly noteworthy were the deliberations on the subject of the establishment of an international criminal court. Discussions on other important subjects, such as international trade law, refugees, the law of the sea, and environmental law were equally valuable and useful, especially for clarifications of the legal issues involved from the perspective of Asian and African countries.

We are also happy to note that under the able leadership of its Secretary-General, Mr. Tang Chengyuan, the Committee is undertaking rationalization of its work programme and priorities. To meet growing demand due to the increasing importance of international law in diverse areas of international life, the Committee is organizing programmes of legal cooperation between the AALCC and other international law bodies in the United Nations system and outside it.

The training programmes that the Committee is contemplating for the benefit of its member States will also no doubt prove useful. United Nations assistance in the implementation of such programmes would increase the content of cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC.

Above all, the efforts of the Committee to modernize its functional apparatus within its limited budget are praiseworthy. We have no doubt that the Committee will continue to grow from strength to strength in the years to come. India extends its full cooperation towards that goal.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to emphasize that existing cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC could be deepened and enhanced in a functional manner so as to further benefit its membership by ensuring better understanding of international law, and by adapting it and contributing to its development. We are also glad to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution on this item, and recommend its adoption.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the observer for the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee.

Mr. Bhagwat-Singh (Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee): On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, I wish to thank the General Assembly for its consideration of the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.13. It shows the confidence of members in the efforts of AALCC in its work and cooperation with the United Nations. We would also like to express our appreciation to the sponsors of the draft resolution and other delegations for their support and comments on the work of our Organization as expressed in earlier statements. The report of the Secretary-General (A/51/360) describes some of the areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. We would like to commend the Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations and members of the Secretariat for the preparation of a fairly comprehensive report on the various activities and programmes of the AALCC towards strengthening the role of the United Nations and its various organs.

Every other year, the General Assembly takes up the item of cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. This gives us an opportunity to discuss some of the substantive areas within our area of competence.

The AALCC was constituted in November 1956, and in the years since it was granted permanent observer status in 1980 its work in support of the United nations has predominantly aimed at rendering assistance to AALCC member States in their consideration of the agenda items before the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. It has also assisted in economic and humanitarian fields through the preparation of briefs and studies by its secretariat. This has required the inclusion of certain items and topics under consideration by the United Nations in the work programme of the AALCC.

Another significant aspect of the AALCC's work has been the efforts towards the promotion of the ratification and implementation of major international instruments and such initiatives as wider use of the International Court of Justice for the peaceful settlement of disputes. At each of its successive sessions, the AALCC has urged its member States to ratify or accede to key multilateral conventions such as those on the law of the sea, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The AALCC which began with a membership of 7 States today has 44 members and 2 observers. From a small beginning, emerging from the historic Bandung Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, the AALCC has gradually established itself as a major forum for international cooperation. Its work programme has also been oriented to meet challenges posed by contemporary international society and the needs of an expanding membership of our two organizations.

During the 1960s, the AALCC was among the first regional organizations to study the matter of the legality of nuclear weapons. During the 1970s when the law of the sea and the question of a new international economic order were in the forefront, the AALCC made its contribution by being instrumental in evolving the concept of archipelagic States and exclusive economic zones.

This year also marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Principles Concerning Treatment of Refugees adopted by the AALCC at its eighth session. The Bangkok Principles, as they are popularly referred to, were the first set of norms and principles to be adopted by a regional organization with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is proposed to review the Bangkok Principles later this year in the light of the experience acquired during the last 30 years. A special seminar to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Bangkok Principles is to be convened at Manila in December for this purpose.

Earlier in the course of the present decade, when the General Assembly decided to convene a conference on environment and development, the AALCC secretariat involved itself, as extensively as its resources permitted, with the preparatory phase of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The involvement of the AALCC with the United Nations Decade of International Law has been particularly significant. The secretariat of the AALCC has recently been involved in the United Nations Environment Programme initiative on international environmental law aiming at sustainable development and the study on the need for and the feasibility of new international environmental instruments aimed at sustainable development. A meeting of legal advisers of States members of the AALCC was held at United Nations Headquarters on 9 October 1996. Among other things, it considered the issue of the AALCC's contribution to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 to be held in June 1997.

In the years since its establishment, the AALCC has made its modest contribution to the objectives and goals relevant to its sphere of competence. In the process, it has established a relationship with a number of organs and agencies of the United Nations. The Committee will continue to work to support the work and activities of United Nations bodies and to cooperate to ensure that the rule of law prevails in international relations. The new international legal order must affirm such principles and norms of inter-State relations as the sovereign equality of States; non-interference in the internal affairs of other States; the non-use of force; the peaceful settlement of disputes; respect for human rights; the right to development; the protection and preservation of the environment; and the principle of the common heritage of mankind.

This year the AALCC will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of its establishment and, among other things, will be publishing a collection of essays on international law contributed by eminent scholars, lawyers and officials of member States and of United Nations bodies.

I also wish to inform the General Assembly that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/360 will be distributed to the participants of the thirty-sixth session of the AALCC, to be held at Tehran in May 1997 at the invitation of the Government of Iran. I take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all States Members of the United Nations and observers to participate in this annual session of the AALCC.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.13.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.13?

Draft resolution A/51/L.13 was adopted (resolution 51/11).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 120, 129, 140 (a), 134 and 157.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that:

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 120

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/643)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/643).

The draft decision, entitled "Employment of retirees", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

Agenda item 129

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/639)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/639).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/12).

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda items 129 ***(continued)*** **and 140**

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/640)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/640).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/13).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 129 and sub-item (a) of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 134

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/637)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/637).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/14).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 157

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/638)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/638).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly also wishes to adopt it?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/15).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 157.

Agenda item 44

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review

of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that, in a letter dated 31 October 1996 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the group of Western European and other States for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See during the debate on agenda item 44, "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

Members will recall that in accordance with established practice of the General Assembly, observer non-Member States may normally make statements only in the Main Committees. However, following consultations and taking into account the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See in the course of the debate on agenda item 44, "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I call now on the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, Mr. Hisashi Owada of Japan, to introduce the report of the Ad Hoc Committee and the draft resolution contained in section IV of that report.

Mr. Owada (Japan): It is my honour as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s to present to the General Assembly the report of the Committee as contained in document A/51/48.

The session of the Ad Hoc Committee was held at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 20 September 1996 and was attended by a large number of Member States, entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The documentation for the mid-term review, as well as statements made at the opening meeting and during the general debate, have greatly contributed to facilitating the deliberations and achieving encouraging results.

The mid-term review represented an invaluable opportunity to demonstrate the validity of the emerging consensus for a new and innovative approach to the development of Africa. While the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which was adopted by the General Assembly by resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, represented a global compact between African countries on the one hand and the international community on the other, the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee submitted for adoption at this session constitute a set of common and complementary objectives and targets to be implemented in an integrated manner and in a spirit of full partnership.

It should be noted that during its organizational session held on 20 June 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee had decided that the mid-term review would be conducted in two Working Groups to review the two main parts of the UN-NADAF, relating to Africa's responsibility and commitment and the responsibility and commitment of the international community. Both Working Groups, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Insanally of Guyana and Ambassador Reyn of Belgium respectively, wisely avoided apportioning blame either to the African States or to the non-African partners. Instead, as can be seen in the conclusions that form the annex to the draft resolution submitted to the Assembly, the Working Groups identified selected areas in which to carry out a fair and impartial assessment of achievements over the past five years, and produced concrete and realistic recommendations to be implemented through cooperation and partnership among all the parties concerned.

It is heartening to note that, avoiding a pitfall encountered in the past, African countries and their development partners successfully concluded their discussion and analysis of the performance of all the parties involved, even in such controversial areas as political and economic reform, promotion of the private sector, human development, regional and subregional cooperation and integration, resource flows, external debt,

trade, economic diversification and capacity-building. Thus, in spite of persisting differences with respect to these issues, such an approach led all parties to identify areas where additional efforts are required, and to recommend measures that are as practical and as specific as possible.

It should also be noted that the mid-term review of UN-NADAF took into account the developments that have taken place in the field of international cooperation. Prominent among them are the series of United Nations conferences and summits that have been held since the adoption of UN-NADAF. The outcomes of these global gatherings have helped, through the assessment and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, to further the interdependence of such critical elements as social development, economic development, environmental protection and human rights.

Another point that was repeatedly referred to by the Ad Hoc Committee was the relevance of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. It should be noted that there was a broad consensus that the Special Initiative should be seen as an operational arm of UN-NADAF and that it should help in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the New Agenda.

The Ad Hoc Committee also reviewed the follow-up, monitoring and evaluation machinery of UN-NADAF at the global, regional, subregional and country levels. In this regard, two aspects were highlighted: the need to enhance coordination among the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including harmonization of the activities of UN-NADAF; and the Special Initiative on Africa.

Follow-up and monitoring should also take into account recent initiatives such as the proposal made at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ministerial meeting of May 1996 for a new global development strategy, which was subsequently endorsed in the Economic Declaration of the Group of Seven summit in Lyon in June 1996. Another important follow-up activity identified by the Ad Hoc Committee is a second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held in 1998, at which, *inter alia*, implementation of the outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF is expected to be reviewed.

As indicated earlier, the assessment and recommendations with respect to the efforts of African countries in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the support of their development partners, and the follow-up and monitoring machinery have been undertaken in the spirit of full partnership and shared responsibility. In other words, they reflect the conviction of the international community that the development of Africa is one of its major challenges in this post-cold-war era, and that an economic take-off in that region would not only improve the standard of living of its people, but would also have a positive impact on the world economy as a whole.

The General Assembly and all its individual components within and outside Africa should not only endorse the conclusions that have just been outlined but, more important, create the conditions for their speedy and successful implementation. Indeed, their common determination, demonstrated during the mid-term review, to go beyond the traditional division between donors and recipients, or North and South, should be seen as an enabling factor for creating such conditions.

Having thus far given an assessment of the UN-NADAF mid-term review work in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, I wish to offer a few points by way of comments on this UN-NADAF mid-term review exercise in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Japan. The first and the foremost point I wish to make is that, as many other colleagues of mine have repeatedly stated in the past, the problem of development in Africa is at a major crossroads. In the new international environment created by the end of the cold war, an environment in which the interdependence of the nations of the world, the globalization of the world economy, and the incidence of military conflict within national boundaries are all increasing, the development of Africa is one of the most pressing issues facing the international community, and it will continue to be of enormous significance well into the next century.

Economic and social development is not only important in and of itself. It is also a key to resolving the recurrent tragedy of armed confrontation and all the problems that flow from it. If only for that reason, we must keep our eyes on the problems impeding development when we address security and political questions in Africa. Also, economic take-off by a significant number of African countries through development would not only enhance the economic well-being of the peoples of Africa, but would also benefit the rest of the world enormously by promoting the full integration of African economies into the international economic system.

In clear recognition of this, in 1993, as the world began to reorder itself in the aftermath of the cold war, Japan, as host country for the G-7 economic summit in Tokyo, took the initiative in introducing the idea of a new development strategy. That concept came to be reflected in the economic declaration issued at the conclusion of the Tokyo summit meeting. Although at the time it existed only in the most rudimentary form, the strategy became the basis for the Tokyo International Conference on African Development that Japan organized in Tokyo later that year.

Since that time, Japan has been unwavering in its commitment to the international effort to promote the development of Africa. Thus, my Government hosted a series of meetings and seminars on this subject that proved most productive. On the strength of this experience, Japan is now planning to host a Second Tokyo Conference, this time at the summit level, in 1998. I should like to take this occasion to make it clear that it is the intention of my Government to link the cycle of Tokyo Conferences, which includes preparatory meetings and conferences, with efforts to implement UN-NADAF, so that they can complement and reinforce each other.

The best way to establish such a linkage is to identify common targets based on a new partnership of all parties involved in the development process. It is also important to set the ways and means to achieve this by utilizing not only official development assistance but also private investment, trade, social infrastructure building, human capacity development, and all other elements which are essential to achieving those targets, as well as by devising an ideal policy mix to suit the concrete socio-economic conditions of the countries involved. It is precisely this comprehensive and individualized approach that Japan has been refining and promoting as the ingredients of the new development strategy.

To start the process of implementing UN-NADAF through the new development strategy, Japan made two concrete proposals in the course of the mid-term review. First, it proposed that South-South cooperation be put into practice in the area of human resource development in Africa. Secondly, it urged that the General Assembly, as the only political institution in existence in which all the nations of the world are represented, engage in intensified dialogue with other international development agencies, by discussing with them the outcome of the review, with a view to strengthening collaboration in this area.

On this first point, specifically, it is the intention of my delegation to begin working with like-minded countries to establishing concrete plans on South-South cooperation in the area of human resource development in Africa. Let me explain specifically what we intend to do between now and the Second Tokyo Conference on International Development, to be held in 1998. The delegation of Japan has a plan to organize in New York a series of seminars for the purpose of exploring concrete ways to facilitate the implementation of South-South cooperation projects, particularly in the field of human resource development and institution-building. These seminars will be open-ended, and all delegations that have something to contribute on this score will be welcome. More detailed information on these seminars should be available before long. For next year, Japan, together with the United Nations, will host the Second Asia-Africa Forum in Thailand, as well as a preparatory meeting for the Second Tokyo Conference. Both of these events will, I hope, be instrumental in giving impetus to the implementation of UN-NADAF.

I wish to close my statement in my dual capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the UN-NADAF mid-term review and as Permanent Representative of Japan by stressing once again the importance of the issue of the development of Africa to all the Members of the United Nations, whether they are from Africa or not. With that recognition keenly in mind, my country, Japan, pledges to make the development of Africa its highest United Nations policy priority. Japan intends to be at the forefront of all international efforts to promote our common goals in this extremely important part of the globe.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 5 p.m. this afternoon.

It was so decided.

Mr. Mpay (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/160 of 22 December 1995, our delegations met from 16 to 20 September 1996 within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. I should like here to extend our congratulations to all the members of the Committee for the outstanding work accomplished.

I should in particular like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, for his personal commitment, which is clearly a reflection of the concern of his country, Japan, for Africa. This concern has been reflected not only through the holding of a series of conferences and seminars on the development of Africa, but also through the adoption of numerous initiatives for the continent. By way of example, I would like to mention the holding of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the establishment of budgetary appropriations for training of young people and the promotion of South-South cooperation.

Before taking up the question of the mid-term review as such, I would first of all like to place the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) in its historic context so that we can better grasp its importance. Having noted that five years after the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development the socio-economic situation of Africa was in fact deteriorating, the international community decided to conceive and adopt a new far-ranging, but realistic instrument for the development of the continent, based on the recognition that the development of Africa is primarily the responsibility of the Africans; that the objective of sustainable economic development can be achieved only through the establishment of a favourable international environment; and that the implementation of any programme for development requires a new type of partnership, one that goes beyond the simple ties that may exist between former colonies and their former colonizers. In short, there was a need to produce a new philosophy for development with shared but differentiated responsibilities and an active and sustained partnership.

This is what we did on 18 December 1991 by adopting the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Under the terms of that Agenda, Africa was to undertake, strengthen or speed up reforms, in particular in the political, economic and social areas. The international community, for its part, was to encourage and sustain these efforts of Africa. Five years after the adoption of UN-NADAF, the balance sheet looks as follows. As was so well pointed out from this very rostrum by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and Acting Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, the overwhelming majority of African countries have fulfilled the commitments they made under the New Agenda. They have undertaken far-reaching and difficult reforms designed in particular to speed up the process of democratization, promote human rights and to ensure economic, social and cultural development.

During the past five years, significant breakthroughs have been made in democratic reforms through better management, greater transparency and greater popular participation in the management of public affairs. The Cairo Declaration adopted last year reaffirms the commitment of Africa to pursue these reforms.

As regards the promotion of investment, the majority of African countries have adopted new, very liberal investment regulations. They have gone on to significant customs and fiscal reforms and sped up the process of removing the State from the management of companies. The combined effects of these reforms and of structural adjustment have allowed a number of these countries to limit inflation to approximately 5 per cent.

Concerning popular participation, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in activities for development has been recognized, and in the majority of African countries a framework for concerted action and coordination with these new partners has been set up. At the continental level, an Organization of African Unity (OAU) and non-governmental organization working group has been established to ensure greater participation of the non-governmental organizations in the activities of the OAU. Regarding the mobilization of resources, efforts have been made, in particular for control of public expenditures, to increase domestic savings and relaunch foreign trade.

In the context of cooperation and regional and subregional integration, beyond the purely economic framework, new initiatives are proliferating for the maintenance of peace — for example, the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), entrusted with the question of Liberia in West Africa, and similar mechanisms set up in southern Africa for the establishment of peace.

Despite all these efforts, as was so well stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee,

"Many of the critical social and economic problems which led to the adoption by the General

> Assembly of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986) and of the New Agenda in 1991 still exist. In some countries the problems have even worsened ... In Africa poverty and unemployment are expected to increase substantially. The estimated resource mobilization levels in the New Agenda are still far from being attained and the key development goals have yet to be met." (*A/51/48, annex, para. 4*)

The major merit of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF, the results of which have been submitted today for our consideration, is that it has allowed us to take objective and scrupulous stock of the implementation of UN-NADAF. Above all, it has allowed us to realize that plans and programmes, however ambitious they may be, are nothing without the political will of States to implement them. It is precisely this political will to which I am appealing today on the behalf of all Africa. This is not an appeal to charity, but rather an appeal to remove those obstacles that are negating all of Africa's efforts for development. For, as has also been emphasized by the Acting Chairman of the OAU, how can Africa develop if the financial flows towards the continent decline every day, if official development assistance, which is already declining, is subject to more and more conditions, if the burden of debt continues to increase, if African commodities have difficulty finding access to international markets and if the trend towards reducing investment in our countries is expanding and new capital is still not coming in?

If the international community really wants to support Africa's efforts, as it has committed itself to doing under the terms of UN-NADAF, it must direct its action towards priority areas such as the diversification of commodities and African economies, the improvement of conditions for access to the international market, increases in investments and financial flows and the solution to the problem of external debt.

As Cameroon has already stated, African economies are based primarily on trade in commodities, and any development strategy for the continent must take this reality into account. In this context, the efforts of the African countries to diversify their commodities and economies must be supported by the international community, and favourable conditions should be established for the access of these products to international markets. We welcome the measures taken at the level of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to step up production, promote intra-African trade and facilitate vertical diversification of industrial production through the development of Africa's technological capabilities. We also welcome the opening of a special facility for the diversification of African commodities, the Common Fund for Commodities. Africa is awaiting the annual meeting of the board of the Fund in Marrakesh next December and is expecting not only practical measures for the proper functioning of the facility but also bolder measures.

Regarding the foreign debt, we welcome the positive developments that have taken place recently, in particular the adoption of conditions for debt reduction that are more generous than the Naples terms for the most heavily indebted poor countries. I should like to repeat President Biya's appeal for the urgent implementation of this new initiative and its extension to a greater number of African countries.

At the dawn of the third millennium, Africa remains the continent facing the greatest number of challenges. It is clear that the responsibility for meeting these challenges lies above all with the Africans themselves. However, the duty of solidarity requires that the efforts of the continent be supported by the international community.

In this respect, UN-NADAF offers us an outstanding framework for partnership and cooperation. We can work together within this framework to build an Africa free of the scourges of debt, famine, endemic illness, school underenrolment and other ills. In a word, we can work together to advance an Africa which has joined the train of globalization and universalization. We therefore call upon the international community to fully and urgently implement the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly contained in document A/51/48 submitted for our consideration.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): At the outset, I take pleasure in thanking Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan, who presided over last September's proceedings of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). I would also like to thank the Government of Japan for its efforts to help our continent. The most recent demonstration of this was at the High-Level

Seminar on African Development, which was held at Tokyo in August 1996 in the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

In respect of item 44 entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" I would like to make the following comments: I would like first to thank the international community for its interest in the development and growth of Africa. It is now the turn of UN-NADAF to give effect to United Nations support for the economic emancipation of the continent. The Agenda is a recommitment by United Nations Member States to support African development efforts. For the African States, it constitutes an act of faith and a sign of hope in support of their struggle for development, despite the current international situation and the difficulties they are facing. This support is particularly welcome, as the economic and social crisis that African has been experiencing for the past decade has yet not come to an end in broad areas of the continent.

Together with prolonged drought and acute ecological problems, the situation could only have led to social turmoil which has imperiled the precarious stability of countries, many of which are extremely fragile. It has been in this hostile context that African countries have had to adopt policies to reverse negative trends and put order into their devastated economies. In this connection, stabilization and the structural adjustment programmes sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have been undertaken in almost all of our countries. The reform and structural adjustment programmes to which African countries are committed have all been multidimensional in nature, including measures for domestic economic and commercial liberalization aimed at improving financial management, expanding the tax base and enhancing efficiency and transparency in the fiscal system. Reforms have also been focused on promoting direct foreign investment and on consolidating regional and subregional cooperation. Particular attention in this ambitious project has been given to the human dimension of development and to the balance between the environment and development.

The efforts of the African countries have obtained uneven results, although they have been positive overall. In 1992, 20 African countries experienced negative growth. In 1995, the number of such countries fell to 4. In 1992 once again, three African countries achieved a 6 per cent growth rate in gross national product. In 1995 there were 12.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the Secretary-General's report on implementing UN-NADAF (A/51/228 and Add.1), which indicates that as assessment of the implementation of this new order in 1992-1995 shows that results have been achieved in the areas of human development, the strengthening of institutions and the development of the private sector. However, the report adds that African efforts will not be successful in the time-frame set in UN-NADAF without appropriate support from the international community. This solidarity must be reflected in reliable contributions of sufficient resources on the one hand, and by the establishment of a favourable international context on the other.

Tunisia welcomes the efforts by other countries of the South to enhance their economic cooperation with Africa to that end. That cooperation is particularly noteworthy because it relates to such crucial areas as the transfer of technology and knowledge, providing advisory services, training, joint ventures, trade and investment. The interest that countries of the South have in Africa can also be seen in the development of agriculture and fisheries, education and research, and the alleviation of poverty.

A significant step towards achieving South-South solidarity was seen at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which was followed by the Asia-Africa Forum: Sharing of Experiences. But such South-South solidarity, which we welcome, does not suffice to help Africa overcome its current crisis. The scope of the problem and the complexity of the obstacles that the continent must overcome in building the foundations of its infrastructure and its social and economic development require greater resolve and more resources, both nationally and internationally, to guarantee that Africa, like other regions, will enjoy sustained and lasting growth and development. We must acknowledge that the activities under way in industrial countries and in the United Nations system, are far from meeting the problems facing Africa. This insufficiency is reflected in official development assistance, investments and indebtedness.

In his report, the Secretary-General notes that

> "Since the early 1990s, less than 2 per cent of total foreign direct investment flows worldwide have come to Africa." *(A/51/228/Add.1, para. 20)*

Marginalizing Africa in direct foreign investment amounts to marginalizing it in world trade. This situation gives rise to deep concern.

The same document indicates that overindebtedness has been one of the major obstacles to Africa's economic recovery and lasting growth. In this connection, it is emphasized that despite the efforts that have been made the main foreign debt indicators show no appreciable improvement. Debt continues to grow and today represents a total of 71.6 per cent of Africa's gross domestic product, as compared to 67.1 per cent in 1991.

The negative flow of debt servicing — which is currently on the order of $28 billion, while UN-NADAF envisaged an annual ceiling of $9 billion — is not offset by the meagre resources received from official development assistance.

Official development assistance has continued to shrink, despite African efforts to use it better. Official development assistance to the continent is currently only $20 billion, far from the $30 billion set by UN-NADAF, with a 4 per cent annual growth rate.

Tunisia would like to express its appreciation for the initiatives taken by some countries — particularly by Japan, Norway and other Nordic countries — which have unreservedly adhered to the additional aid targets for Africa that were called for in UN-NADAF.

In this context, we believe that urgent measures must be taken in this area in order to increase capital flows to the countries of Africa. These measures should lighten the burden of external debt on African countries, thereby enabling them to move from the adjustment phase to the development phase.

The international community must support Africa's efforts to diversify its economy, thereby enabling its peoples not to depend on the export of one or two commodities, the prices of which fluctuate according to the market.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General with regard to estimates of the resources needed to implement UN-NADAF. In its conclusion, the report emphasizes that

> "the rigid international economic environment, the domestic economic hardship and the lukewarm disposition of some creditors to adopt radical measures have constituted obstacles to the mobilization of financial resources and to the development of Africa". *(A/51/228/Add.1, para. 53)*

The document adds that,

> "Nor can Africans and the international community afford to see yet another international initiative for Africa's socio-economic recovery and development fail." *(Ibid., para. 53)*

Endorsing this conclusion, Tunisia, which expresses its appreciation for the Secretary-General's initiative for Africa, sends out an appeal to the international community to ensure that this initiative is successful.

I would like to recall in this connection the terms of draft resolution A/AC.251/L.2 on the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF, which the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole adopted by consensus last September. It calls upon all Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations — that is to say, the entire international community — to take the necessary measures to ensure effective implementation of UN-NADAF, with a view to the final evaluation undertaken by the United Nations in the year 2002.

The will of the countries of Africa to emancipate themselves and put an end to economic dependency should be received with interest by the international community, with a view to ensuring that the continent can find once again the path of growth within the framework of globalization and the interdependence of the world economy.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): The mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) is a major opportunity to address issues that are critical not only to the African people, but to the international community as a whole. The report contains an assessment of actions undertaken and recommendations to fulfil specific development goals and address the challenges faced by African countries in their development process. It is a reaffirmation of the principle of partnership and shared responsibility towards Africa, to which Brazil fully subscribes.

Although agendas, initiatives and debates can create the reassuring impression — particularly in the General Assembly — that the international community is reaching

out in support of Africa, they can also generate a sense of frustration, especially on a continent that faces so many development challenges. The exercise we have undertaken is no exception to this, and we must ensure that it generates concrete actions.

The role of the United Nations is crucial to translating commitments into concrete action in the coming years. It is important that the various agencies of UN-NADAF. I am convinced that in order to make a difference for Africa in areas such as finance, the United Nations must forge a closer relationship at all levels with the Bretton Woods institutions. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa, set up by the Secretary-General, can play a more important role in this respect.

Some areas of the United Nations Secretariat — such as the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and the Economic Commission for Africa — can also play a central role in implementing UN-NADAF and should therefore be strengthened.

We welcome the recently launched United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. At the same time, we stress that this Initiative is complementary and not an alternative to UN-NADAF. The fact that the Initiative has not involved the provision of new resource flows to Africa is, in our view, a source of frustration.

The achievement of the goals set forth in UN-NADAF goes far beyond institutional arrangements in the United Nations system and will depend ultimately on the political will of each of our countries to do its part. For this reason, I wish to focus now on one specific aspect of the implementation of UN-NADAF: the role a country such as mine, Brazil, can play in favour of Africa.

As a developing country which faces situations of extreme poverty and severe economic imbalances, Brazil is not a major donor. However, we are deploying efforts to share with African nations our own experience in struggling for development. In a number of areas of cooperation in capacity-building, this is already a reality. This is the case in fields such as management of agricultural policies, know-how on tropical agriculture, electric power generation and its distribution to poor communities, and monitoring and exploration of mineral resources. Some of these activities are under way in bilateral programmes or are under consideration within multilateral initiatives, such as the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic.

Most African countries still rely on a few primary commodities for much of their export earnings. Our cooperation with African countries to correct the imperfections of commodity markets is well known. Brazil and Africa coordinate with each other in international organizations on commodities, such as the International Coffee Organization, the International Cocoa Organization, the Cocoa Producers' Alliance and the Common Fund for Commodities.

Three years ago, when coffee prices were in a critical situation, we responded to the appeal of President Houphouët-Boigny on behalf of the Inter-African Coffee Organization to create an agreement with an economic clause. As a result, as Foreign Minister at the time, I had the honour to sign in 1993, in Brasilia, the agreement which established the Association of Coffee Producers.

We are working together in organizations such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with a view to ensuring that we are not discriminated against by rules that negatively affect the consumption of our products, such as the criteria for defining rules of origin for coffee in the WTO Committee on Rules of Origin, as well as the question of norms related to cocoa products in the FAO Codex Alimentarius.

More recently, there have been new modalities of cooperation between Brazil and Africa. One example is the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries, which was formally created earlier this year and of course includes the participation of Portugal and five Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa.

The dialogue between subregional integration processes is yet another example of cooperation. We attach great importance to furthering a dialogue between the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the integration processes in Africa. With the Southern African Development Community, we have already taken initial steps in this direction. I would like to point out that one of the objectives of MERCOSUR has been to enhance external trade with other partners, including those of the developing world.

As far as conflict resolution is concerned, 30 years ago Brazil rejoiced at the creation of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU), which symbolized the end of colonialism. Today, we welcome new approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution that will

more deeply involve the Organization of African Unity. For our part, we are engaged as troop contributors in the peacekeeping process in Angola, as well as in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), with the participation of more than 1,000 men. Recently, we actively supported the peaceful transition in Mozambique, both in the United Nations Security Council and in the field.

One could ask whether Brazil could do more. The answer is certainly "yes", and we are committed to doing so. Presently, we are negotiating cooperation programmes with some African countries, focusing on social rehabilitation policies for populations affected by war and for children needing special protection measures, as well as on control of endemic diseases and HIV/AIDS.

I wish to conclude by assuring the Assembly that Brazil is fully committed to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly has just concluded the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The conclusion shows that the main goals of UN-NADAF are far from having been attained, despite the untiring efforts of the African countries over the past five years. The African continent remains plagued by widespread poverty, heavy debt, worsening terms of trade and serious shortfalls in financial resources for development. Many African countries are being marginalized in an international environment of accelerating integration.

In order to put an end to this situation, priority areas and concrete suggestions for future action were proposed in the mid-term review. Meanwhile, African countries in the international community reaffirmed their respective commitments to the New Agenda and to the principle of partnership and shared responsibility in this regard. While gratified by the consensus reached in the mid-term review, we must ask ourselves how we can avoid having to reiterate the same commitments a few years hence and how can we truly translate them into actions that will contribute to Africa's recovery and healthy development.

During the mid-term review, African countries strongly urged the international community to fulfil in earnest its commitments under UN-NADAF. I clearly remember the strong appeal made by the Ambassador of Cameroon in his statement on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) members, which called for the international community to talk less to Africa and do more to support African efforts. This just demand of the OAU highlighted the New Agenda and its lack of direction for future international cooperation.

We have no doubt that Africans will continue to undertake the primary responsibility for the economic and social development of their continent. However, the consequences of the ruthless exploitation they suffered in the past and the poverty and underdevelopment caused by today's grim international economic environment are seriously hampering their efforts to achieve economic and social development. In these circumstances, African countries need the active support and cooperation of the international community in order to become free of the vicious cycle of underdevelopment. We are of the view that international support based on partnership and shared responsibility should be reflected in a series of measures.

First, more solid work should be done to help resolve the pressing problems confronting African countries. In this connection, efforts should be made to create a favourable external environment, in line with the priority areas identified in the mid-term review, to alleviate debt burden and increase capital flows into Africa, to promote Africa's economic diversification and improve its economic structure, and to establish fair terms of trade and increase market access for African commodities to the developed countries. It should be particularly emphasized that official development assistance remains the main source of external funds for many African countries. The countries concerned should fulfil their commitment by increasing official development assistance for African countries to meet their dire needs.

Secondly, concrete action should be taken to support efforts for development cooperation between African countries, including the regional integration process in Africa and subregional economic cooperation. In recent years, African countries have been exploring new ways to enhance cooperation, so as to accelerate the achievement of common development by learning from and complementing each other. The establishment of the African Economic Community and the development of many other regional and subregional economic cooperative organizations have brought about a strong momentum for cooperation. However, such regional cooperation efforts often suffer a lack of sufficient resources. The international community has no reason to stand by with folded arms. Rather, it should cooperate with African countries in their endeavours in this area.

Thirdly, the particular choice of a road for development on the part of the various African countries should be respected. Countries vary in their national conditions, needs and priorities. Imposing a specific model on Africa, in disregard of its actual situation, can only aggravate its difficulties. Sincere assistance should have no political strings attached.

Fourthly, the United Nations should continue to play a primary mobilizing and monitoring role in the effective implementation of the follow-up to the New Agenda. The United Nations has already launched the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. The United Nations and the relevant bodies within the system should contribute to Africa's development by putting in sufficient resources and formulating and implementing assistance programmes in the light of the specific features of African countries and their priorities for national economic development.

An important component of China's foreign policy is to strengthen unity and cooperation with developing countries, including those in Africa. China has provided some assistance, within the means available to it, to African countries in support of their economic and social development. In recent years, we have been discussing with African countries ways to expand cooperation in various forms and through various channels, with a view to further expanding the scope of the cooperation and improving its efficiency. China will continue steadfastly to support African countries in their efforts for economic development in the context of bilateral and South-South cooperation. While continuing to provide government assistance to them with no political conditions, China will encourage enterprises on both sides to cooperate with each other and expand the channels, for the further growth of trade between China and Africa. In this way, China wishes to contribute its share to the attainment of the goals of the New Agenda.

His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of China, predicted during his visit to Africa last May that

> "a united, stable and prosperous new Africa will mean not only economic liberation for the politically emancipated African people, but also a tremendous contribution by Africa to peace and development in the world and to the civilization and progress of mankind".

We are convinced that this will become a reality.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): The adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) by the General Assembly in December 1991 raised major expectations of better prospects for Africa.

In his mid-term report on UN-NADAF, the Secretary-General has confirmed that most African countries have taken action to promote growth and development. Many African countries have embarked on a range of political and economic reforms, which have shown signs of "tangible progress".

In particular, there has been a significant improvement in overall economic performance, with the number of African countries achieving UN-NADAF's annual target growth rate of 6 per cent in gross domestic product (GDP) increasing from three countries in 1992 to 12 countries in 1995. The number of African countries with negative growth also has dropped, from 19 countries in 1993 to three countries in 1995.

However, despite the various efforts of the African countries themselves and the assistance of the international community, those results have fallen short of what was envisaged by the New Agenda. In the first half of the 1990s, Africa's GDP accounted for only 2.04 per cent, on average, of the world output.

African countries have acknowledged that

> "Africa's future is in their hands." *(A/51/228, para. 55)*

But the international community must also take concrete steps to help African countries adjust to the new global market environment. Greater investment inflows, diversification of export products and expanded access to external markets are urgently required. There is a need to improve the quality of international support for Africa's efforts. Most of the region's potential remains unrealized.

We have seen that within the South-South cooperation framework, the experiences of advanced developing countries are relevant to African development. This suggests that South-South cooperation is a viable strategy for African development. The many areas covered under this cooperation include the transfer of technology and expertise, the provision of advisory services, training, joint ventures, trade and investment, agricultural and fishery development, and education and research.

Singapore is fully committed to South-South cooperation. Within the limitations of our small size, limited resources, manpower constraints and inexperience, Singapore has adopted a stage-by-stage approach for the provision of technical assistance to other developing countries.

In 1992, Singapore formalized and expanded its technical assistance programmes through the establishment of the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore currently coordinates SCP training courses and study visits for about 2,000 officials each year. Those officials come from more than 60 countries, including many African countries. Over 150 courses are conducted annually by some 40 Singapore public sector agencies. These courses cover a broad spectrum: civil aviation, health and medicine, customs documentation, economic development policies, information technology and the English language.

Singapore also has third country training programmes with seven countries: Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway and the United Kingdom, and three international organizations: the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank. Singapore also cooperates with the United Nations Development Programme and the Colombo Plan in running various training programmes.

At this time, because of our limited resources and manpower constraints, Singapore has been able to focus on only four African countries. However, we will expand this to include nine more in the near future. While we would like to do more, we are not able, with our small size and other limitations, to reach all 53 African countries.

Singapore therefore is exploring new ways and means of extending the reach of our technical assistance to as many African countries as we can. One example of this is the Botswana National Productivity Centre, which was opened by President Masire in August 1995. Singapore has also begun to conduct training for 75 Botswanan work improvement team facilitators, who are being trained in Singapore in three batches over three years.

By training these Botswana officials, Singapore hopes that the Centre will not only serve Botswana, but will become the premier training ground for productivity-related courses for the whole of southern Africa. Singapore has also given assistance to Ghana by providing training on how to adapt Singapore's social security system to Ghana's needs. We again hope that this experience can be of relevance to Ghana's neighbours.

I would like to add that at a recent dinner in Singapore, hosted by our Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, in honour of the visiting Namibian President, Mr. Samuel Nujoma, Prime Minister Goh announced that Singapore will send a high-level study team to Namibia to discuss Namibia's specific training needs and to examine the possibility of formulating longer-term training programmes. Singapore's focus on training stems from its emphasis on human resources development, as this is an important factor in developing an economy. We hope to extend similar programmes to other African countries soon.

The private sector in Singapore has also begun assistance programmes for the African countries. On 22 October 1996, an African scholarship scheme was formally announced in Nairobi, Kenya. Under the scheme the Singapore International Foundation, a Singapore non-governmental organization, and the Standard Chartered Bank will offer scholarships at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and also short-term management courses to African nationals to study in Singapore. A total of 28 awards will be made available for the first three years.

Singapore has only been able to assist a small fraction of the African countries because we are a small country and have limited resources, especially in relation to manpower. We hope to do more in the future. Singapore believes in South-South cooperation and will continue to do all it can to help its friends in Africa realize their full and undoubted potential.

Mr. Willis (Australia): As we move into the second half century of the United Nations and towards the new millennium, it is sobering indeed to recognize that although so much has been achieved to advance the human condition in many parts of the world, a substantial section of the world, by and large, has not been party to that progress. Nor will it be in the future unless there is substantive change.

Over the last 15 years, economic growth has failed in almost 100 countries around the world, representing 1.6 billion people — almost one third of the world's population. Seventy of these countries now have average real incomes below those in 1980, and 43 are below 1970 levels. Many of these countries are in Africa, and for much of the past 15 years especially they have been

experiencing negative economic growth. Thus, between 1980 and 1994 Africa's real gross domestic product per capita fell by 15 per cent.

More recently, however, the situation has improved, with the average rate of economic growth increasing considerably in the last couple of years. Africa is now in the third consecutive year of real per capita growth and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is forecasting growth in Africa of 5 per cent this year and next — the highest growth rate in two decades.

Furthermore, in 1995 12 African countries achieved or surpassed a rate of growth of 6 per cent — the target rate of growth for Africa as a whole established in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa at the start of this decade. Moreover, the number of African countries with negative growth declined from 20 in 1992 to only 4 in 1995.

But, encouraging as these recent developments are, Africa's economic problems are far from being solved. There are still many countries in desperate economic circumstances, with high levels of external debt, minimal foreign investment, low levels of savings, poor terms of trade, adverse balances of payments and minimal participation in the global economy. As a consequence, they suffer from low growth, low and even falling per capita incomes, high unemployment and grinding poverty.

Despite these economic difficulties, some social progress has clearly been achieved by Africa in such areas as health and education. Thus, there have been important improvements in life expectancy, infant mortality rates and provision of safe drinking water, coupled with improved levels of nutrition, increased literacy rates and higher school enrolment.

Although some of these improvements are quite substantial, the absolute levels of achievement are well below most other parts of the world. There are, furthermore, some serious adverse developments in the social sphere. In particular, endemic diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS pose especially serious problems.

Africa's problems are clearly of such dimensions that they require special and extraordinary efforts if they are to be overcome, and if Africa is not to be largely excluded from the process of human development. This was recognized by the international community and led, among other steps, to the adoption by this body in 1991 of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Such efforts are required not only by the international community, but by Africa itself. In so saying, we acknowledge that many African countries have taken very considerable steps to improve their level of social and economic development, including undertaking structural economic reform to correct economic imbalances, increasing the priority given to social expenditures, providing social safety nets, improving the rights of women and children, protecting the environment, enhancing agricultural production and marketing processes, increasing food security and embracing democratic processes, as well as the introduction of good governance.

Observers seeking evidence that economic reform is consistent with a decline in overall poverty need look no further than the example of Mozambique. While the debate over structural adjustment and poverty in broader Africa continues to attract a great deal of attention, signs of a growth dividend are emerging in Mozambique, which is one of the poorest and most indebted countries in the world.

Nevertheless, for Africa as a whole to make the kind of social and economic progress that it so desperately requires, an even greater reform effort will be required, along with enhanced support from the international community. It is in this context that Australia strongly welcomes the Secretary-General's Special Initiative on Africa. This initiative, which aims to reinforce the New Agenda for Africa by practical proposals to support African development, will require substantial resources, both internal and external, if it is to be implemented. This will in turn require considerable resolve by donor countries, multilateral institutions and African countries themselves to find the $2.5 billion per annum for the next decade that the Special Initiative will require.

Importantly, a key aspect of the Special Initiative — the need for debt relief for highly indebted countries — has been acted upon by the Bretton Woods institutions. The recent annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank agreed to adopt a new debt relief initiative for highly indebted poor countries, many of which are in Africa. This is welcome and practical progress.

Previous debt-relief initiatives have not succeeded in reducing African indebtedness. Indeed, debt has continued to rise; in 1995, it represented 65 per cent of Africa's

gross domestic product and 250 per cent of Africa's exports. The debt-servicing burden, at $28 billion, or 38 per cent of Africa's export earnings, was three times higher than the target set in the United Nations New Agenda for Africa.

Debt burdens of such proportions place great limitations on growth potential. Nor can they be offset by private capital flows, because the very existence of such debts scares off foreign capital and may even create domestic capital flight. Africa has therefore fared poorly in attracting foreign private capital, especially foreign direct investment, which brings technology as well as capital. Of the $84 billion of foreign direct investment that went to developing countries in 1994, sub-Saharan Africa received only 3.6 per cent, and the least developed countries only 1 per cent.

The IMF-World Bank initiative, which could involve the sale of some of IMF's gold reserves to finance this measure, should help considerably over the next several years to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries, thereby relieving a major inhibition on growth. However, this assistance will properly be dependent on policy performance by the countries involved in regard both to macroeconomic and structural policies and to social policy reforms to reduce poverty and improve basic health care and education.

The inclusion of Africa in the global trading network is also a key factor in generating substantial and sustainable economic growth. Africa's increasing marginalization from the world economy, as shown by the decline in its share of world trade from 5 per cent in 1980 to only 2.1 per cent in 1995, must be reversed if it is to embark on a course of strong and sustained economic growth.

That will require major economic transformation to diversify production and exports. Diversification of its economy would involve widening its commodity base, expanding its production of mineral products, and especially increasing its production of manufactured goods. Africa's share of world manufacturing value-added has remained stagnant at just 1 per cent over the past two decades. The success of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa is therefore essential if the continent is to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities that will be created by the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

Australia is convinced that global trade and development will be strengthened by further liberalization of trade. An open world trading environment can make a positive and lasting contribution to economic growth and improved living standards. But extra measures, both national and international, are required. Australia therefore strongly supports the declaration of the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD IX) and has, through its own initiative, taken measures to help developing countries to benefit more completely from the opportunities presented by the post-Uruguay Round trading environment.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa will be central to achieving these policy and economic benchmarks. We support these measures and welcome the report of the Ad Hoc Committee undertaking the mid-term review.

Australia recognizes that the challenges faced by Africa are considerable and that multilateral partnerships are one important way of overcoming them. Australia also recognizes that Africa itself is taking definitive action, nationally and regionally, to put in place appropriate macroeconomic policies, to establish necessary infrastructure and to develop a skilled workforce. These African initiatives and reform measures were the subject of recent discussion at the Organization of African Unity summit meeting in Yaoundé. Australia supports this process and we will work with our African partners to assist in the implementation of agreed priorities. Like others, we also support the broad thrust of the recommendations in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee. We look to joint resolve to deliver against the agreed goals.

Australia's aid flows to Africa are expected to total over $A 105 million in the financial year 1996-1997. Our recognition of Africa's enormous development needs is evidenced by the fact that, although our aid is modest compared with the challenges faced, we are expanding the percentage of our bilateral aid allocated to Africa.

For the first time, Australia will be negotiating full country programmes with Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa. These programmes will emphasize capacity-building, private sector development and poverty alleviation. Support will also be available for regional activities in southern Africa for areas such as health and desertification. In the area of health, Australia is particularly aware of the urgent need to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa. To this end, we have pledged $A 10 million for HIV/AIDS care and prevention projects in Africa. Almost

$A 2 million of these funds have now been committed for projects in Zambia in support of innovative ways of reducing HIV transmission and strengthening community-based care for AIDS sufferers.

Australian assistance will continue to be available to other countries in the Horn and eastern and southern Africa. The focus will be on training assistance, assistance through non-governmental organizations, emergency and relief programmes, and reconstruction and reform activities.

In conclusion, Australia welcomes the United Nations initiatives for Africa and the principles of partnership on which they are based. We look forward to joining a consensus resolution supporting the outcome of the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Mr. Aass (Norway): We are here today to adopt the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Norway strongly believes that the time has come to commit ourselves to ensuring that concrete steps are taken towards radically improving the livelihood of the many African women, men and children who live in absolute poverty. In other words, we should be content with no less than a common understanding and commitment from all involved parties — the countries in sub-Saharan Africa and bilateral donors, as well as the various United Nations agencies — to tackle the problems of Africa by operationalizing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), through the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

The mid-term review process has highlighted some central causes for the lack of implementation of UN-NADAF. Although at this stage we should not dwell too much on the past, it is important to take due note of these causes if we want the United Nations system to play a role as a major actor and initiator. The Norwegian Government is convinced that the United Nations system and the Secretary-General have an important role to play and a responsibility to take initiatives — such as the one taken for Africa — when the situation calls for it.

Experience has shown, however, that before initiatives are launched, extensive consultations are necessary — even crucial — to secure follow-up. UN-NADAF has been hampered by the fact that it has not been sufficiently anchored in the Governments in Africa, and that consequently it has not been adequately integrated into their development plans. In addition, the responsibility for implementation has been divided among different United Nations bodies. The countries in question often do not possess the necessary administrative capacity to deal with too many donors and agencies. It is therefore necessary to ensure that initiatives are well coordinated and broad-based, and that organizations of the United Nations system act in a unified manner at the country level. Last but not least, it is imperative that donors be consulted in time so as to secure financing and ensure sufficient funding.

The mid-term review has provided us with an opportunity to take stock of the situation in Africa. We note with satisfaction that the Organization of African Unity's assessment of the implementation of UN-NADAF coincides with the review. This fact, together with the consensus on the linkages and complementarity between UN-NADAF and the Special Initiative, which means that the latter is the operationalization of the former, will bring the process onto a new and sounder track. We now have legitimate hope that Africa's poor will play their rightful part in the development process, and that this constitutes an important step forward on the path to poverty eradication.

Norway supports the mid-term review's stress on implementation. The review provides us with an assessment of the present situation, describes the framework conditions and provides the African Governments and the international community with recommendations regarding implementation.

The Governments of Africa have come a long way towards creating a framework within which concrete actions can be implemented on a sustainable basis. In order for African leaders to be able to encourage and sustain this framework and even develop it further, we, the international community, must undertake firm commitments.

In my Government's view it is vital that adequate financial resources be allocated to the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. The mid-term review has shown that there are insufficient resources available to secure its implementation. We are concerned by the facts presented in the review, which show that Africa's debt burden has increased and that the level of official development assistance has dropped in this decade to an average 0.3

per cent of donor gross national product (GNP). Norway has for many years allocated around 1 per cent of its GNP to development assistance. It is our hope that by adopting the mid-term review the countries in the developed world will assume their responsibility for contributions to the financing of the Special Initiative. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Mr. Ricupero, stated in his intervention at the ninth session of the Conference, "We are all indebted to Africa". In Mr. Ricupero's thinking, assistance to Africa is a matter of justice; resources have been taken away from the continent over the centuries, and it is now time for the developed world to reverse the flow of resources.

In my Government's view, the review suffers from the fact that there is no outline for the practical implementation of the Special Initiative. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution adopted at the review might take us a long way towards fulfilling the Special Initiative — or it might not take us anywhere. The real challenge ahead is starting the implementation at the country level. However, before this can be done, modalities for coordination and cooperation as regards action on the Initiative must be clearly defined to ensure that we do not lose more time. We encourage the steering committee of the Special Initiative to give top priority to operationalizing the Initiative in a dynamic manner. Most of the activities planned under the Special Initiative are in the social sector. We are confident that with the broad aid experience gained in the past, activities will be planned and implemented in a manner that will not lead to further aid dependency in recipient countries.

Allow me to conclude by restating Norway's commitment and readiness to participate in a coordinated effort for the development of Africa. This includes a preparedness to participate in a dialogue on the implementation of the Initiative both at Headquarters as well as at the country level. Our commitment also implies a willingness by Norway to come up with additional budgetary funds, for example in the social sectors, as a follow-up on the 20/20 initiative. It is my Government's firm hope that this mid-term review will be a fresh point of departure for the Special Initiative. Innocent African children deserve hope for the future, a hope that stretches beyond day-to-day survival.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.51

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

51st plenary meeting
Monday, 4 November 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)

Mr. Fowler (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. Iceland also aligns itself with this statement.

Six weeks ago the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly completed the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The European Union (EU) welcomed the opportunity offered by this review to focus international attention on the special situation and particular needs of Africa. We presented our views in a detailed statement to the review meeting and through the submission of a position paper. The EU availed itself of the occasion to reaffirm strongly our commitment, in a spirit of partnership and dialogue, to the development of Africa. We do so again today as the Assembly gathers to endorse the outcome of the mid-term review.

The Ad Hoc Committee assessed progress made to date in the implementation of the New Agenda and agreed on recommendations for the next five years. The review recognized that, while some encouraging progress has been made in social and economic development, in increasing democratization, in regional integration and in conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional level, this progress has been uneven, and much remains to be done, as has been outlined, *inter alia*, in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/50/885).

In this context, the EU wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his recent initiative in holding high-level consultations on post-conflict peace-building in West Africa.

The occasion of the mid-term review has allowed us to place UN-NADAF in the context of the related commitments and plans of action of the recent series of major United Nations summits and conferences and to take these commitments into account when making

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recommendations for future action. We reconfirmed the new consensus on an integrated approach to development — an approach which places people at the centre of our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The European Union welcomes the action-oriented nature of the final document of the review meeting and the recommendations on such issues as the strengthening of democratization and the involvement of civil society, good governance, social sector development, economic reform, environment and development, debt, trade and diversification of economies, capacity-building and South-South cooperation.

We commend the commitments made at national level to the implementation of relevant recommendations through, *inter alia*, the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources and through increased allocation of resources to the social sector.

The outcome of the review was the result of detailed negotiations open to all States. All those who participated worked hard to achieve a consensus. The results of this review should now be formally endorsed; we should avoid duplication of effort through reopening the consensus reached.

The support of the international community both at bilateral and multilateral level remains essential. Indeed, since the review meeting, the international community has agreed to take action, through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, on one of the most important issues addressed at the review. In addition, the Paris Club has indicated that it is ready to go beyond the Naples terms to provide debt reduction of up to 80 per cent for countries which qualify for additional relief within the HIPC Initiative, on a case-by-case basis, according to its usual rules, to achieve an exit from unsustainable debt.

In October this year we had an opportunity to strengthen further our support for regional integration in Africa when the Southern African Development Community and the European Union met at ministerial level in Windhoek, Namibia, and agreed to consolidate and increase cooperation in such areas as strengthening democracy, combating illicit drug trafficking, clearance of landmines, promoting regional integration and promoting trade and investment with and within southern Africa.

The European Union remains fully committed to supporting African countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to strive to reach, as soon as possible, the objective of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to be devoted to official development assistance and to the related targets for assistance to the least developed countries, a majority of which are in Africa. We believe that this assistance should be directed to the poorest countries and to the poorest sections of societies. The 20/20 initiative, whereby interested developed and developing countries agree to allocate, respectively, approximately 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes, could also play a useful role.

Needless to say, the role of the United Nations system is central to a successful implementation of the outcome of the mid-term review. It is important that all concerned support the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa as a way to implement the New Agenda for Africa in a coordinated, system-wide manner. We support the efforts of the various funds and programmes, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and other bodies of the United Nations system, to give priority to Africa and to the necessary readjustment of programming, as appropriate, in the light of the outcome of the mid-term review and the assessments of progress made in the implementation of the summits and conferences.

In conclusion, the European Union fully endorses the outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF. We are committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendations, which we hope will lead to real progress in fostering human and social capacity, in strengthening economic performance and in protecting the environment, thus laying firm foundations for a better future for all African people.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Argentina is participating in this debate for three basic reasons. The first reason is that we believe that in doing so it is paying tribute to a very important sector of the United Nations, without whose substantial contribution practically no change would have been possible in the General Assembly. Specifically, without the initiative and support of African countries on questions such as disarmament, human rights, development and the environment, to cite a few examples, these issues would not have been aired or dealt with successfully in our Organization.

The African Group, by its imposing numbers, has been the architect of the most important progress made in

the United Nations. In close alliance with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and other regional groups, it laid firm foundations for the effective consideration of many of the conflicts that the United Nations has witnessed and continues to witness.

For all these reasons, we think the time is now ripe for the United Nations to begin to devise a way to return to the African Group and to Africa some part of the great contributions they have made to date. We particularly believe that we should promote all the initiatives that can catalyse the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Those initiatives should provide structural opportunities for development and not merely try to counteract the consequences of poverty.

The second reason why we are participating in this debate is to support the report (A/51/228) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Accordingly, to consider the thoughts put forward by the Secretary-General in the summary section of that document are very important. Priority problems are mentioned, such as good governance, the development of human resources and public savings: in sum, everything that falls under the heading of democracy and responsibility in African countries.

The Secretary-General also mentions the need to settle the disputes that afflict the countries of that continent. In this connection, we believe that Africa has provided the international community with extremely valuable examples applicable to the settlement of current conflicts without violence.

We must ask ourselves how it was possible for Africa to assimilate the legacy of decolonization and the problems of apartheid and territorial conflict — which by their very essence are very difficult to solve — and now, on the other hand, finds itself faced with violent and apparently insoluble problems within its own communities. There appears to us to be an inconsistency between the problems African countries, Governments and peoples overcame not long ago and the African problems appearing today on the political agenda of the United Nations.

Success in reforms, promotion of the private sector and direct foreign investment, increased activity in the democratic process and the strengthening of civilian society are essential elements of an Agenda for Development, and to a large extent depend on the support of the international community, in terms of resources and political will. We would therefore like to congratulate the Government of Japan for having convened a series of meetings to establish the bases for defining the terms of international cooperation. We find it important — indeed, essential — in this debate to note the conclusions recently reached at the high-level Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

We also attach importance to the activities announced by the Group of 7 in Lyon, France, and to the decisions adopted within the framework of the Bretton Woods financial institutions to relieve the external debt burden of African States.

Finally, in the context of the upcoming World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting to be held in Singapore, it is essential for the future of Africa and the rest of the developing world that the increased opening of markets under way in our countries be accompanied by a genuine, far-reaching elimination of the trade barriers that still exist, thus ensuring access for the products of developing countries.

The third reason why we are participating in this debate is to initiate thinking on the potential for cooperation between Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. In this connection, I believe that both regions have a large degree of agreement on the major themes. One of these, for example, is security. The signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba at Cairo, Egypt, last April is a new contribution towards the final goal of fully eliminating nuclear weapons. There are many other points and many other issues on which there is agreement.

With regard to Argentina and Africa, some years ago we set up a fund for horizontal cooperation. Some of its resources are oriented directly to Africa, and currently there are over 70 projects under way. They include various activities, such as training for agricultural and livestock work, pest eradication, cross-breeding and even computer science, State reform and privatization.

Along other lines, Argentina has been, is and will be participating in peacekeeping operations in Africa and in all humanitarian and medical assistance activities where it may be of assistance.

Finally, I would like to clarify that all these problems are universal. Latin America is not exempt from them, nor is Argentina. This is why we are so

sensitive to the problems of Africa and have such a strong sense of solidarity with Africa.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation on the whole takes a positive view of the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In our view, this document objectively reflects the situation at the half-way point in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and contains a number of useful and specific proposals and recommendations.

Since the launch of UN-NADAF, a number of countries on the African continent have made real progress in social and economic development, thanks to efforts at the national, regional and international levels. The number of countries with negative growth rates has decreased substantially and, indeed, there has been marked increase in the number of relatively successful countries in which annual rates of growth in gross national product have reached 6 per cent.

The monetary reforms carried out in many countries on the continent, steps taken to strengthen financial management structures, as well as measures to increase the efficiency and transparency of the tax system have all contributed to the stabilization. Such steps, among others, represent additional incentives for potential investors.

However, it is still too early to celebrate. Rather, it is time to consider the fundamental causes of the persistently critical economic situation that prevails on the continent, the growing unemployment and the spread of poverty.

Like many others, we are concerned that in the four years since the initiation of UN-NADAF, the targets set for the mobilization of financial resources have been only partially achieved. This relates to the volume of domestic savings, the persistently high level of external debt, and the fall in official development assistance.

We have taken note of the report's conclusion that in a number of African countries there was an increase in foreign direct investment, the returns on which were much higher than in other regions. There are prospects for an increase in the flow of investments as economic reform is implemented and as the investment climate improves. In this context, a positive assessment should be given to the efforts made by numerous African countries to introduce accelerated procedures for the registration of investment applications — one-stop institutions — and to the expansion of the establishment of export-processing zones offering special concessional packages of services for the generation of income in the production and trade sectors.

Without the settlement of the numerous conflicts in Africa and the assurance of political stability, the African development strategy cannot be achieved. At the time we welcomed the establishment by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of a mechanism for conflict prevention and early resolution. Its work is designed to ease the efforts of the international community in peacemaking and eliminating humanitarian crises, and thus to facilitate the mobilization of resources for the development of Africa. Unfortunately, the planned potential of this mechanism has not yet been fully realized.

Destabilizing trends have assumed a particular significance today in connection with the events in the Great Lakes region, which threaten a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented dimensions. The international community must take urgent measures to prevent this and then tackle the roots of instability in this region, including ethnic tensions, poverty and underdevelopment. Development is the pathway to stability. The planned 10-year United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is particularly important in this regard, as it provides for the World Bank to play a coordinating role in the mobilization of the resources needed for its implementation.

Russia is making a contribution, to the extent possible, to the provision of humanitarian assistance in the African continent. We not only provide aid during humanitarian operations, but also give equipment and vehicles in response to the needs of the countries concerned.

Multilateral and bilateral cooperation in Africa is characterized by many overlapping and complementary programmes and operations. In this connection, we attach crucial importance to the report's emphasis on the need to prevent the dissipation of efforts. The best way to ensure this, in our view, is to enhance the coordinating role of the United Nations in providing assistance to Africa.

An important element for the successful development of the African economy is the strengthening of coordination among the donor countries and the many

international agencies to ensure teamwork in the implementation — tailored to conditions in Africa — of the recommendations of recent world forums on the theme of social and economic development.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Whatever may be said about the critical economic situation of African countries and the problems they face, their causes and effects, there is no doubt that we all agree on their seriousness and the need to find the right solutions to them in order to avoid consequences that could jeopardize international peace and security.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, was a good initiative aimed at giving the international community the opportunity to review the deteriorating economic and social conditions on the African continent with a view to finding the proper solutions for them and to renewing the commitment to support Africa's efforts to achieve continued economic growth and sustainable development.

All of us are aware that there are intrinsic reasons that contributed to the aggravation of these problems and negatively influenced Africa's development plans. Foremost among them is the colonialism to which the countries of the continent were long subjected, during which their natural and human resources were drained and their markets cruelly monopolized. Not only were Africa's minerals and raw materials exported abroad, but Africans themselves were shipped across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to contribute to the economic and industrial development of Europe and the United States.

When, after arduous struggles and many sacrifices, African peoples finally obtained their political independence, they found that they were the poorest peoples and that their continent was the poorest of continents. Africa has 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries. Yet the draining of Africa's resources has continued in different forms, the worst of which has been the continually low prices of its exported raw materials and the continual rise in the prices of manufactured goods it imports. As a result, African countries have had to borrow money in order to achieve a measure of development to mitigate the poverty and deprivation suffered by their peoples. While most African countries are indebted, the truth is that they have repaid their debts many time over given the exorbitant interest rates imposed on them, which have increased Africa's external debts to $US 322 billion in 1995.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) has focused on realizing sustainable growth and accelerating progress in agricultural development, food security, human resources development, rural and urban development, the establishment and maintenance of infrastructures, the creation of the appropriate social environment, and the enhancement of regional economic cooperation.

The mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda finds that the situation in the African continent is still essentially a cause for concern. Population growth rates in many countries outstrip growth in the gross domestic product, and this in turn has negatively affected food security. Africa's share of international trade is very small indeed, indicating that the continent is not fully integrated in the world economy. Most African countries suffer from a very severe shortage of the domestic resources needed for development, because of the accumulation of external debt, the reduction in official development assistance, and restrictions on the transfer of technology and on access of their products to the markets of developed countries. Other contributory factors include civil wars and natural disasters, leading to the spread of poverty and unemployment, and the growing problem of refugees in the African continent, who now number more than 7 million.

As regards its economic and social development Africa has proved its sense of responsibility. Several African countries have embarked on long-term political and economic reforms. Some of these countries have achieved growth rates of 6 per cent of gross domestic product. Others have started to formulate and implement strategies for the eradication of poverty, as indicated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

However, progress so far has been slow and insufficient. Rates of economic growth are still very low in many African countries; rates of trade growth are deteriorating; the debt burden is accumulating; and poverty, unemployment and population growth are markedly on the rise. Endemic diseases are on the increase. This proves that five years after its adoption UN-NADAF has not been given the expected support by the international community. It is therefore incumbent upon donor countries, international financial institutions

and the United Nations system to create a favourable external environment to support national efforts in the implementation of the New Agenda — which was adopted by consensus. UN-NADAF requires the full support of the international community, which has morally committed itself to assist Africa economically and financially with a view to creating favourable conditions for an effective sustainable development that would compensate the peoples of Africa for all the hunger, disease, poverty, deprivation and ignorance they have suffered.

Western countries are in the debt of the African peoples, and they must shoulder their responsibilities. Indeed they will be the true beneficiaries of ending Africa's backwardness, because legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe would cease and a favourable situation would be created for reverse immigration of African talents from Europe to their own continent. This could result in an economic, industrial and agricultural renaissance that would make Africa a useful partner of Western countries through increased trade between Africa, Europe and other continents.

Although it is important to create favourable conditions for the flow of direct foreign capital to African countries, the owners of this capital should understand the needs and the problems of African countries and should focus on a number of priority questions, in particular the development of human resources conducive to a productive labour force, which is essential for economic growth, and support for self-development in society, based on the concept that human beings are the means and the ends of development.

Peace is a precondition for development. The two concepts are interrelated. In this context, my delegation notes that coercive economic measures and sanctions, in all their manifestations, imposed by certain developed countries against some African countries, such as mine, with a view to exercising political and economic coercion against those countries, in addition to the attempts by a big Power to impose its laws beyond its own territory, all run counter to the aims of development and peace. They violate the norms that govern coexistence among States.

Despite the coercive economic measures that have been imposed on my country for several years now, causing great hardship for its innocent people and obstructing its development plans in various sectors, my country does everything it can to support development in Africa, in the firm belief that cooperation and interdependence among African countries, especially in the economic field, is an option to which there is no alternative for the enhancement of development and progress in the African continent. My country has contributed to the implementation of several economic and social projects in Africa through the establishment of joint ventures and joint development banks in addition to giving several concessionary loans and donations to help address the consequences of natural disasters, desertification and epidemics. This is based on our belief in the importance of economic cooperation among African countries to enhance their capacity to achieve economic and social development. I wish to reaffirm that we will continue to meet our commitments to the development of Africa based on our unwavering policy towards the continent to which we belong, and based on our conviction that the continuation of the critical economic situation in Africa could jeopardize international peace and security.

We call upon the international community to show its solidarity with Africa by supporting UN-NADAF, which is the basis for cooperation among African countries, donor countries and international financial institutions based on the principle of shared responsibility, strengthening partnership and abandoning the policy of indifference and marginalization to which the continent is currently subjected. The support we call for is necessitated by humanitarian and ethical considerations towards a continent which has long suffered from colonialism, plunder, deprivation, backwardness, marginalization and exploitation.

In this context, I would like to recall the address by President Museveni of Uganda during the General Assembly commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in which he stated that:

> "Africa will develop whether or not Europe forgets Africa ... [Our] development does not depend on Europe's remembering us ... [It] is crucial that we in Africa solve these bottleneck problems and ... the factors within Africa that have stopped us from developing. The exogenous factors, those from outside Africa, are only secondary ...
>
> "Does that mean that Europe should not help us? No, Europe should help us. First, the Europeans owe us debts. They caused us many problems. They came and plundered our economies. They used our economies to build themselves up so it is a moral requirement that Europe should help us if only to pay for past mistakes." (*Official Records of the*

General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, 37th plenary meeting, p. 2)

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I am pleased to address the General Assembly concerning implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We are at the midpoint — halfway between the launching of the New Agenda five years ago and its end point early in the next century. More broadly, we are in the midst of a great historic transition, as cold-war divisions fade and the new realities of our own era are more clearly defined.

Earlier this year, I travelled to Africa, visiting Liberia, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi — all countries about which the United Nations has been deeply concerned. This visit reinforced for me the belief that in this new era the peoples of the world have many important interests in common. The New Agenda for development in Africa is one of them.

Clearly, taken as a whole, Africa remains deeply troubled. It faces daunting problems, including civil strife, a large foreign debt, increasing populations dependent on decreasing amounts of usable land, and an inadequate flow of investment.

Our shared goal, reflected in the New Agenda, is to bring down these and other barriers to growth, working both at the national and international levels, not overnight, but over a period of time during which steady progress is made. We work together towards this end because we know that an Africa that is progressively more free, stable, productive and prosperous will benefit every segment of the world community. It will promote sustainable development at the national level aimed at alleviating poverty, combating hunger and disease, providing education and jobs, and ending the discrimination that afflicts many people on the continent, holding them back from realizing their full human potential.

It will enhance the climate of cooperation that has led recently to the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the approval of a ban on nuclear tests. It will make it easier for African nations to fight back against the transnational networks of crime, narcotics and terror that imperil every continent. It will help Africa to preserve its rich bounty of natural resources and thereby add to the health and sustainability of our global environment. It will lend further momentum to the trend towards more open economic and political systems that is the defining characteristic of this decade. And it will contribute, through expanded commerce and a more efficient use of resources, to a rising standard of living not only for the people of Africa, but for all people.

Over the past decade, guided by a process of ongoing dialogue and by conference deliberations in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and Istanbul, the world has narrowed past disagreements and moved closer to consensus on issues related to human development. It is from this basis of common ground that we now review the New Agenda for the development of Africa.

As the mid-term review indicates, we have come to understand that economic development, social development, environmental protection and conservation are mutually reinforcing. They are each elements of sustainable development, and they each add to our quality of life.

We know also that the primary impetus for economic growth in Africa, as elsewhere, must come from the private sector. It is encouraging, therefore, that many Governments in Africa are facilitating growth by creating monetary, regulatory and legal policies that allow legitimate private enterprises to take hold. They are also making choices that maximize available resources through investments in education and health, and that expand access for women to the levers of economic and political power. As a result, the economic outlook in Africa is improving. After three years of decline, the continent experienced real gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 1.9 per cent in 1994 and 3.2 per cent in 1995. Real per capita growth was positive last year, for the first time in six years.

These gains would not have been possible without a commitment by many African Governments to economic and political reform. If Africa is to move forward, that trend must continue and broaden.

Momentum towards democracy in Africa must also continue. People on every continent have learned that democracy is a parent to development. That is because development depends on people, and people who are free to exchange ideas, publish their thoughts, organize their labour and invest their capital will contribute far more to a society than those shackled by repression.

Since 1989, more than 20 African nations have embraced democratic government, including South Africa, whose peaceful transition from apartheid to multi-party democracy is one of the landmarks of this century. Certainly, we must agree with former President Soglo of Benin that, when it comes to democracy, Africa cannot afford to be held to a lesser standard than other regions.

In the same manner, the world must do all it can to help Governments and non-governmental organizations within the region to strengthen civil society. By so doing, we enhance the rule of law, protect human rights and create the kind of stability in which local entrepreneurs can thrive and outside investors can have confidence.

Finally, we have established common ground about the need to cooperate to end the conflicts that still plague Africa, retarding development and causing immense human suffering. Here again Africans must play the lead role. No outside force, even if regionally based, can impose peace on those who do not desire peace.

My Government has pledged to help interested African States to increase their capacity for responding to conflicts through an African crisis response force.

We are supporting strongly the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Angola. We are seeking a worldwide agreement to end the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, which have been especially devastating to Africans. And we are lending strong diplomatic support to initiatives originating in the region that aim at preventing further bloodshed in trouble spots such as Burundi and Liberia.

We know that in Africa, as elsewhere, one of the great challenges we face is controlling ethnic hate and curbing extreme nationalism. Despite the current problems in Central Africa, Africans generally have much to teach the world about the peaceful resolution of ethnic differences. Together, we must get across the principle — the truth — that what matters most everywhere is not the distinctions that divide us, but the common humanity that binds us. And we must find practical means to help those working to bring peace and achieve reconciliation in places now threatened or racked by conflict.

Today, five years after it was launched, the New Agenda for the development of Africa retains its significance. The world must work together to help Africa realize its full potential. Although this effort cannot succeed without wise and forward-looking African leaders, neither can the many leaders who merit that description succeed without the partnership of international institutions and overseas friends.

Accordingly, my Government continues to support the New Agenda; we endorse the mid-term report and its recommendations; and we will continue to participate actively and cooperatively in its implementation.

We also support the Special Initiative for Africa announced this spring as a means for implementing the New Agenda.

We will strive, with others, to enhance food security in Africa and to see that commitments made at this month's World Food Summit are kept. We will work towards the integration of Africa into the world's economy, and, where we can, will help deserving countries to meet the rules and requirements of the World Trade Organization.

Official development assistance, both bilateral and through the operational activities of the United Nations, and multilateral lending will continue to be essential to support national efforts by African countries. They are most effective when they supplement and promote private sector participation and leverage private capital flows. Reform of these United Nations funds and programmes can ensure greater efficiency, delivering more resources on the ground to finance development.

Finally, we will continue to participate in efforts to ease the debt burdens borne by the world's poorest countries, especially those whose Governments are committed to policies of economic and political reform. To this end, the United States has forgiven more than $1.2 billion in debt owed by 19 countries. We also joined in approving the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement to provide enhanced debt relief for the most heavily indebted poor countries.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Today the greatest divide in the world is not between East and West or North and South or left and right. It is between those trapped by the grievances and preconceptions of the past, and those who have the vision and courage to shape the future.

As we prepare for the twenty-first century, we know that the key to the future of Africa is not donor-led development, as some have insisted in the past, but rather

development, based on the rule of law and full respect for human rights, that is led by the private sector and guided by a new generation of forward-looking African leaders working in partnership with international institutions, non-governmental organizations and Governments around the world.

Together, let us pledge that, five years from now, when we look back in this body upon the completion of the New Agenda, we will each be able to say that we did our part to end conflict, strengthen democracy, promote reform, and create opportunity for all the people of Africa and by so doing, to help people everywhere live richer, freer and more rewarding lives.

Mr. Muhammed (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset to convey the congratulations of my delegation to His Excellency Ambassador Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan, His Excellency Ambassador Denis Dangue Rewaka, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Gabon, and His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana for their contributions to the successful conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which took place last September at United Nations Headquarters.

The outcome of the review process demonstrated how much African Governments and the international community need to strengthen their partnership to put the African continent on a sustainable path of social and economic development. The review places a formidable challenge before us, as partners in the development of Africa. My delegation therefore takes this opportunity to call for a renewed and fresh commitment by the international community to the accelerated implementation of the programme of action envisaged in UN-NADAF for the rest of the decade. The specific areas of concern that should be addressed as a matter of priority both by African countries and by the international community have been very well defined in the review exercise. It is with that understanding and trust that my delegation would like to highlight certain aspects of the mid-term review.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was a political compact between the African countries and the international community, aimed at fostering the economic and social progress of Africa through transformation, integration and diversification. It further aims at reducing the vulnerability of the African economy to external shocks and at internalizing a self-reliant process of development. An average actual growth rate of 6 per cent per annum for gross national product was also set as a target. However, the review outcome explicitly demonstrated that much more remains to be done in the future to achieve the objectives of UN-NADAF.

In an effort to benefit from the increasingly globalized and liberalized world economy, African countries have undertaken major structural adjustment and wide-ranging economic reforms within agreed structural and sectoral frameworks. They have also been taking parallel measures to strengthen democratic reforms. Notwithstanding the commitment of many African countries to securing peace and macroeconomic stability, sometimes at great political risk and with tremendous social hardship, the gains of reform fall short of expectations. African countries continue to be marginalized and have not been effectively integrated into the world economy. Poverty has grown in magnitude and severity. Except for modest recovery and growth in a few African countries, the per capita income growth of the majority is far below the target set in UN-NADAF.

These deteriorating trends stem in part from a steady decline in international support and cooperation. Official development assistance is at the lowest level in 20 years. Official development assistance is now only 0.25 per cent of the combined gross national product of all countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development as compared to the 0.7 per cent target set at the United Nations in 1970; that has taken a heavy toll, particularly on African development.

The aggregate net resource flow to Africa — official development assistance and other — amounted to only $31 billion in 1995, of which $26.4 billion was official development assistance. That shows vividly how Africa depends primarily on a single source of resource transfer, which, unfortunately, has shown a considerable decline in recent years. It is therefore essential to maintain an increased and consistent level of official development assistance of improved quality and quantity. The donor community has to respect and fulfil its commitment by achieving the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, including the agreed menu of aid targets and commitments, as set out in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s.

Likewise, the African countries together received only about 2 per cent of global capital flows, despite their best endeavours to attract private investment through painful structural adjustment programmes and liberalization of their economies. Recent economic analyses attribute these very low levels of investment flows to Africa to the accumulation of such factors as poor infrastructure, poor telecommunication systems and the lack of utilities. It is clear, therefore, that the prevailing weak physical, social and institutional infrastructure in Africa needs to be improved to bring about a significant shift in the direction of foreign investment. African countries need financial, technical and other support from the international community, not only for the execution of their social programmes, but also for the development of their infrastructures that help improve the investment environment.

The new international trading system is one of the areas in which the marginalization of Africa has become glaringly evident. Unless the current unfavourable international trading pattern changes to accommodate the commodity and other trade interests of Africa, meaningful development efforts are not imaginable. For the enhancement of African participation in international trade, access to the markets of the developed world is crucial. Urgent actions aimed at diversifying African commodities and removing tariff and non-tariff barriers need to be taken to strengthen the competitiveness of African countries in world trade.

The debt problem is still with us, and remains a formidable challenge to African economic recovery and development. The debt-servicing obligation of Africa drains a significant amount of scarce resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social development. Although the international community has striven to alleviate the debt burden of Africa through various debt-relief measures, including the Toronto and Naples terms, to date, none of them has been in a position to render durable solutions to the problem.

Even the most recent debt initiative announced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to alleviate the debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries, although it seems commendable, is not only insufficient but limited in scope. In addition, its eligibility criteria and conditionality are a source of concern. Therefore, without a new comprehensive debt strategy that goes beyond existing mechanisms, the implementation of UN-NADAF could be in jeopardy. We wish to reiterate the oft-repeated call for a once-and-for-all development-oriented approach that goes beyond the Naples terms and includes, among other measures, debt cancellation and debt-for-development exchanges.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies occupy a special place in ensuring coordinated follow-up in the monitoring of the implementation of UN-NADAF. The leading role of galvanizing the required synergy within the United Nations system must be given utmost priority. In this regard, the Economic Commission for Africa, which is a regional arm of the United Nations system, must be equipped with the necessary resources and logistic support to discharge its responsibility in the implementation of UN-NADAF in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system.

It is also imperative for the United Nations to coordinate with the Organization of African Unity, which played a leading role in the elaboration and implementation of the Abuja Treaty and the Cairo Agenda for Action to relaunch Africa's economic and social development.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize again the necessity of galvanizing the political and economic commitment of the international community to provide concrete, full support to such a noble programme as UN-NADAF.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): In adopting the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in 1991, this Assembly posed a crucial challenge to Africa and the entire international community. Canada's support for the New Agenda, and our active participation in the review process, can be explained by one simple consideration: our enduring commitment to Africa. This commitment is reflected in the vital and multifaceted relations that we have with African Governments both at the bilateral level and through a range of multilateral agencies, and which take the form of the continuing engagement of Canadian non-governmental organizations throughout the continent, and growing number of partnerships in the private sector.

As the report of September's mid-term review meeting underlines — and African Governments rightly insist on this — the primary responsibility for African development rests with Africa. United Nations agencies, partner countries such as Canada, and international business and non-governmental organizations have a role to play, but it is necessarily a complementary one. They can do no more — and must do no less — than support

the leadership of African Governments and citizens in shaping their own development.

Leadership and the spirit of initiative in African countries have produced many positive developments in recent years. In his report the Secretary-General observed that there has been significant improvement in public administration in Africa in recent years. There has been a new pragmatism and competence in economic management, a renewed commitment to making poverty reduction a top priority of social policy, and remarkable progress in political liberalization, including a greater place for civil society in social and economic policy, as well as Government accountability. Such good news seldom makes headlines — however, it should.

(spoke in English)

The Secretary-General has also observed — and this cannot be overstated — that civil conflict continues to have a major impact on development in Africa. Recent conflicts have entailed tragic human costs; but they also entail massive costs in terms of the political attention and resources that must be devoted to them by the international community. This reinforces the need to continue our efforts to strengthen United Nations conflict prevention and conflict resolution capabilities. The Secretary-General has shown leadership in this regard with his appointment of a Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region. He has, of course, Canada's full support in this undertaking.

To surmount internal and external conflicts, there is no substitute for home-grown political will. The Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is an important step in this direction, which Canada has welcomed and has supported financially. In a similar vein, at the recent Ottawa Conference on anti-personnel landmines, several African countries made key contributions, including an African regional component to the agreed Plan of Action. It is hoped that a treaty totally banning landmines can be signed by the end of 1997. Until the millions of landmines are removed, in particular from rural agricultural land in Angola and Mozambique, economic and social development in those countries will be sorely hampered.

Development assistance remains an important factor in Africa's economic development. For its part, Canada allocates 44 per cent of its bilateral aid to Africa. But this is only one element of the solution. As the September mid-term review states, efforts to promote the private sector and foreign direct investment must be accelerated. This can best be achieved when there is an open, transparent domestic system in place, and when the private sector and civil society are fully engaged in the process. Canada thus encourages such activities as the International Finance Corporation's Extending the Reach programme. And we are increasingly witnessing significant direct investment by Canadian companies in numerous African countries.

One result of the mid-term review should be a further streamlining of the United Nations system's implementation of UN-NADAF. The cause of African development will not be served through a proliferation of parallel or competing implementation strategies. The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa should thus be approached as a complement to UN-NADAF, strengthening the implementation of its programme elements.

We are especially pleased to observe that the United Nations and the international financial institutions have been working together more effectively. We trust this cooperation will deepen, enhancing the implementation of UN-NADAF. Canada welcomes the comprehensive debt relief initiative for heavily indebted poor countries agreed to at the recent annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Heavily indebted poor countries, many of which are in Africa, will now be returned to debt sustainability within a reasonable time-frame. Canada was also pleased to participate in the seventh African Development Fund replenishment negotiations in May and to contribute to the additional special subscription in June.

To conclude, this mid-term review has demonstrated the continuing validity and urgency of the objectives set five years ago by the New Agenda for Development in Africa. And the conclusions of the Ad Hoc Committee's September meeting afford a sound basis for pursuing those objectives with renewed focus in the years ahead. Canada pledges its continued support for this enterprise and stands ready to work in partnership — with the countries of Africa, regional institutions and the United Nations — in addressing the crucial challenges of development in Africa.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the reports that have been made available for the consideration of this agenda item, both during the mid-term review session and in this Assembly. We wish to place on record our gratitude to the members of the Bureau of the mid-term review

session held from 16 to 20 September 1996. In particular, we would like to thank Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan for ably steering the review session. We appreciate the untiring efforts of the Government of Japan to seek solutions to Africa's development problems.

The mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was intended to assess the implementation of the Agenda, to identify obstacles to its prompt implementation, and to recommend ways of ensuring effective implementation of its remaining portions. The review session noted that in accordance with the commitments made under UN-NADAF, African countries had undertaken various political and economic reforms which had contributed to the achievement of economic growth over the past few years. It was further observed that the international community, including the United Nations system, had provided African countries with some support. Nevertheless, the implementation of the Agenda had faced serious obstacles, which had prevented the achievement of set targets. Among other things, African countries had experienced considerable difficulties in attracting the requisite foreign direct investment, and had also been unable to ensure adequate access of their populations to education, health and related social services.

Regarding resource mobilization, the review showed that net disbursements of official development assistance had decreased from about $24 billion in 1991 to $21.9 billion in 1994, before increasing to $26.4 billion in 1995, whereas UN-NADAF had projected a minimum of $30 billion in 1992. The total external debt of Africa also rose from $300 billion in 1991 to about $322 billion in 1995, while Africa's share of world countries' trade declined from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 2.1 per cent in 1995. Implementation of the Agenda was further hampered by shortcomings at the advocacy and institutional levels as a result of lack of clear mandates and insufficient resources.

It is the hope of my delegation that the obstacles mentioned above will be removed and efforts made by all parties to ensure full and timely implementation of the Agenda. African countries will continue, among other things, to pursue the necessary programmes to deepen ongoing reforms, engage in more aggressive investment promotion activities, ensure democratization, and strengthen human resources and capacities for sustainable development.

While acknowledging that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Agenda lies at the national level, we call on the international community to provide the necessary financial resources in accordance with its commitments under the Agenda. These include the provision of official development assistance at an annual rate of $30 billion, to be increased by 4 per cent per annum; the adoption of an effective international debt strategy to address the unsustainable debt of Africa; support for the development of trade infrastructures; the removal of trade barriers; and support for commodity diversification efforts and regional cooperation. In translating the recommendations of the review session into action, my delegation wishes to stress the need to be guided by time-frames for specific targets, bearing in mind that the Agenda has only five more years to run.

It will be most unfortunate for this august Assembly to convene in five years' time at the end of the implementation period, only to acknowledge again that implementation of the Agenda has been behind schedule. To avoid such a situation, and to ensure timely implementation, we wish to recommend that the Secretary-General provide to this Assembly an annual report on the state of implementation of the Agenda, indicating specific action that has been taken by all parties to achieve set targets. This recommendation implies the inclusion on an annual basis for the next five years of an agenda item on this subject. We believe that regular assessment of the implementation of the Agenda will also enable us to determine whether we are on track, and assist us in speeding up where implementation is delayed.

Finally, my delegation expresses the hope that the relevant United Nations bodies responsible for follow-up will be provided with the requisite resources to enable them to undertake their function of improving follow-up and monitoring the implementation of the Agenda.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): Only a few weeks ago, the international community carried out the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). In this connection, I wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Owada of Japan, who so ably chaired the review proceedings, as well as to the entire Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Mid-term Review. Five years after the launching of the New Agenda, the review gave us an opportunity to take fresh stock of the distance we have travelled together and assess what was needed to achieve the objectives we set for ourselves. We therefore welcome this opportunity to exchange views on this subject of critical importance to the African people.

In recognition of the fact that we, the African people, bear the primary responsibility for our own development, we have undertaken various measures to restructure and liberalize our economies at enormous social and political cost. A lot has also been achieved in terms of promoting freedom, social justice, peace and security. The reports presented during the mid-term review exercise bore clear testimony to the fact that the African countries have largely fulfilled their part of the compact. These ambitious and painful reforms will certainly founder if our development partners fail to augment our sterling efforts.

As I observed in my statement during the mid-term review, in many parts of Africa the dawn of an unprecedented era of peace and tranquillity has allowed us to refocus attention and deploy scarce resources towards economic development. However, these peaceful conditions cannot be fully secured without the requisite undergirding of economic development. Development is a sine qua non for international peace and security. We believe that the economic situation in Africa is at a critical juncture and calls for decisive intervention by the international community. An economically vibrant and prosperous Africa is an asset to the world economy. It enhances the possibilities for a peaceful and secure human existence because poverty, deprivation and want are fertile ground for political instability and social decay. As the international community hatches and launches one ineffective initiative after another, that dark cloud hovering over much of Africa threatens to drag us back into the abyss of political instability and even deeper political ruin. The question that this Assembly should ask itself is whether we need to wait until catastrophes manifest themselves in unsightly and gruesome television images in our living rooms.

The mid-term review of UN-NADAF demonstrated that not much had been done to attain the specific targets that we had collectively set for ourselves. We call on our development partners to honour their obligations if we are to rescue the New Agenda from the disastrous failure that it appears to be headed towards. UN-NADAF stands the very real risk of experiencing the fate that befell its predecessor, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD).

While we concede that official development assistance is a crucial part of overall development assistance to Africa, we also remain firm in our conviction that it cannot and should not continue to be the decisive factor that it currently is in our development strategy. We prefer a genuine partnership in trade and not the surrogate role of recipients of aid. And so we are asking how we can prosper if our few exports are denied market access by the high wall of protectionist barriers in developed countries. In order for the African countries fully to benefit from the new multilateral trade regime and the increasingly integrated global economy, the developed countries should abandon their protectionist policies. The sad truth is that while the benefits to African countries from the new multilateral trade regime are far from being assured, what we are certain about is that, in the short and medium term, African countries will suffer substantial losses. The international community should take urgent measures to alleviate the adverse impact of this trend. Equal competition among grossly unequal partners is unfair competition. There is need for affirmative action on behalf of Africa, the weakest link in the emerging global partnership.

We think it is disingenuous for our development partners to insist that African countries meet all their debt obligations to the penny when these payments are gobbling up all our export earnings. We believe that there is a clear and direct relationship between Africa's unsustainable debt burden and the flight from the region of financial resources necessary for economic recovery, growth and development. Many African countries are having to squeeze their people to the point of malnutrition or starvation to meet their debt obligations. Given this unsustainable debt burden, it is good economic sense to give us the opportunity to retain the larger part of our export earnings for reinvestment in our economies.

At the mid-term review, we dwelt at considerable length on the mobilization of domestic and international resources for development. What we find curious is that the outcome of the review process fails to acknowledge the fact that, for most African countries, there is actually a net outflow of resources. In view of the capital flight, we should again ask a rhetorical question: How are we expected to develop if we cannot reinvest our meagre export earnings? We need to arrest and reverse the capital flight that has hamstrung and undermined our efforts to save and to reinvest in our economies. We believe that genuine development is that which is born of and spurred by our own entrepreneurship, creative potential, and by the genius and industry of our own people. But, as I have already said, we Africans are getting dwindling volumes of aid and losing all of it through debt servicing.

Development, as described by the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe in his address before the Assembly in September 1996, is meaningless if it fails to bring food to our dining tables, clean water into our homes, better housing, improved health and peace of mind and security to our children. It is not about statistics. No volume of words, resolutions, conferences or programmes of action can in themselves bring the reality of economic development to Africa. What we need are not empty protestations of solidarity but international development cooperation that transcends the realm of fruitless discourse and manifests itself in concrete terms through discernible improvements in the lives of ordinary men, women and children.

Finally, I wish to conclude by drawing the attention of the participants to an evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for Africa that was conducted by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit. There are also comments on that report by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly for the first time to express Benin's position on item 44 of our agenda, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The delegation of Benin fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the African countries by the Ambassador of Cameroon and with some of the views expressed by the representatives who spoke earlier on this item, whose importance and relevance are self-evident.

From 16 to 20 September last, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly established by resolution 50/160 A, proceeded to the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) under the chairmanship of Ambassador Owada of Japan and with the assistance of the other members of the Bureau, namely the ambassadors of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Gabon and Guyana. I should like, on behalf of my Government and in my personal capacity, to congratulate them on the quality of their work and for their dedication to championing the causes and the interests of Africa.

On 18 December 1991, after the adoption of UN-NADAF by resolution 46/151, the late Ambassador of Norway, Martin Huslid — and here I pay tribute to his memory — stated that in subscribing to the United Nations New Agenda on the Development of Africa in the 1990s,

> "the international community accepts the principles of shared responsibility and full partnership with Africa" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings, 77th meeting, p. 18-20)*

and that it committed itself to giving full and tangible support to the African efforts.

It should be recognized, in one way or another, that the adoption of the New Agenda was accompanied by a heightened awareness, on the political level, of the special situation and particular needs of Africa. These priority items for the international community are addressed in the declarations and programmes of action of the major summits and conferences organized by the United Nations, in international legal instruments concerning the environment and in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

We have no doubt that the next World Food Summit, to be held from 13 to 17 November 1996 in Rome, will emphasize the same concerns.

Furthermore, at the World Summit for Social Development, Heads of State and Government stated in Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration:

> "We commit ourselves to accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries." *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 21)*

Everything leads us to believe that the solemn commitment undertaken by the General Assembly in December 1991 and confirmed by the World Summit for Social Development in March 1995 is of pivotal political importance. Moreover, the Secretary-General has often emphasized and recalled that, in accordance with the programme adopted by joint agreement, Africa is one of the five priorities of the United Nations in the 1990s.

This is one of the basic reasons for the launching in March 1996 of the Special Initiative of the United Nations on Africa, which is designed to promote and to step up the attainment of the objectives set out by the General Assembly within the framework of UN-NADAF.

We note with regret at the mid-term review that, despite this promising political backdrop and the clear will of the African countries to extricate themselves from underdevelopment, UN-NADAF has experienced only an embryonic implementation — or at the very least a fragmentary one. In other words, very few actions or specific steps have followed the litany of declarations, speeches and promises made since the start of this decade.

Attempts by African delegations to secure the adoption by consensus of a resolution calling for the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities within the framework of the implementation of the UN-NADAF chapter dealing with support for the diversification of African economies have encountered a dogged, unjustified and somewhat contemptuous refusal on the part of certain delegations of members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The delegation of Benin would like to hope that the next five years of the implementation of UN-NADAF will be successful insofar as the mid-term review has allowed us to reaffirm and to emphasize the reciprocal nature of commitments and responsibilities, and the need for Africa and the international community urgently to take concrete measures such as those put forward in resolution 46/151 (1991) and reiterated by the mid-term review. It is thus clear that a great deal remains to be done to achieve at least the priority objectives of UN-NADAF, including the effective and total integration of Africa into the world economy.

The mid-term review took place in the context of the globalization of the economy and of the liberalization of trade, which presents opportunities and challenges as well as risks and uncertainty. The risk of further marginalization for Africa is today a real one. This is more than ever the time to make a concerted effort on the global level to establish an international atmosphere favourable to the integration of Africa and of the least developed countries in general into the world economy. The establishment of such an atmosphere requires, *inter alia*, necessary measures to cancel public or bilateral debt; to substantially reduce multilateral debt — which for many African countries has quadrupled within a decade; and to reschedule, if not reduce or wipe out, commercial debt. There is a need to find effective, favourable and lasting solutions to the external debt problem of African countries.

There is a need to redirect the objectives of policies and programmes of structural adjustment towards social development, in particular the elimination of poverty, the creation of productive jobs and the strengthening of social integration.

There is a need to achieve the objective of 0.7 per cent of developed countries' gross national products for official development assistance for developing countries, with 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to be devoted to the least developed countries, of which 33 out of 48 are African countries. There is a need to implement effectively and in a timely manner the commitments undertaken by the international community with regard to the specific needs and problems of Africa.

It is clear that these measures must be complemented by considerable efforts on the part of African countries. I should like here to refer to the need firmly to root and consolidate the process of democratization, which fortunately today covers the entire African continent. This will allow for greater awareness regarding respect for and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for a greater concern for good public administration in a spirit of transparency, justice, credibility, equality and equity.

Benin began its democratic process after the historic conference of the vital forces of the nation in February 1990, well before the 1991 adoption of UN-NADAF. Our move forward to consolidate our new democratic experience has turned out to be entirely consistent with the objectives of UN-NADAF. The Government of Benin keenly hopes to benefit further from the assistance and support of the entire international community, the United Nations system, multilateral financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and all the other elements of civil society throughout the world in order to conclude successfully its programme of building a State truly based on the rule of law and a prosperous nation in which all the citizens of Benin will soon share a minimum level of well-being.

We are aware that the mere satisfaction of the ritual demands of electoral consultations, the implementation of the principle of orderly change of government, the establishment and respect for democratic institutions and checks and balances provided by our Constitution will not suffice to consolidate and guarantee democracy once and for all in Benin and in other African countries.

I would be remiss if I were to conclude my statement without highlighting the quality of the work carried out by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, for the

advancement, implementation and follow-up of the objectives, measures, activities and recommendations of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In the light of the positive conclusions of the mid-term review, my delegation would like to appeal for the strengthening of that Office with the human, financial and material resources required to pursue its mandate.

Indeed, the sudden disappearance of the division for least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing States from the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development after its ninth session, held at Midrand, South Africa, continues to be a cause of serious concern for us. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries is now the sole entity of the Secretariat which is in charge of the advancement, implementation and follow-up of UN-NADAF on the international level. We hope that reforms now under way will contribute to the greater visibility of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Finally, like numerous preceding speakers, I would like to hail the initiatives, activities and projects undertaken by the United Nations system for the development of Africa, as well as the activities and actions undertaken by all of Africa's development partners, including the non-governmental actors which have made the economic recovery and development of Africa one of their priorities.

Thus, I would like to appeal to all States that the results of the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF be scrupulously applied to achieve the effective elimination of poverty, the diversification of our economies, the growth of direct foreign investment and a speeding up of the process of Africa's genuine integration into the system of liberalization of international trade and in the globalization of the economy.

Mr. Abibi (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which the General Assembly adopted unanimously on 18 December 1991 on the basis of the principles of shared responsibility and full association with Africa in the attainment of its objectives, constitutes an important political manifestation of the international community's solidarity with Africa.

At this point in my statement, I would like to associate myself with the well-deserved tribute paid to Ambassador Owada of Japan, as well as to the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, for the masterful manner in which they conducted the mid-term review.

The mid-term review of the implementation of this important political pact highlights not only the great sacrifices made by the African countries in introducing both structural and institutional reforms and the efforts of the international community to support economic recovery and social development in Africa, but also the long road that remains to be travelled to attain the main objectives of the programme.

The delegation of the Republic of Congo considers that the praiseworthy results already achieved should not conceal the many obstacles that remain to be overcome to attain true, lasting development in Africa. The essential goals of the New Agenda are far from being achieved. Despite glimmers of hope here and there on the continent, the economies of the African countries remain very vulnerable to external fluctuations. The development process is far from being endogenous. For the most part, as the excellent report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly emphasizes, many of the economic and social problems that led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development on 1 June 1986 and the New Agenda in 1991 remain acute. The mobilization of the necessary resources remains below the levels forecasted. The debt burden still saps many economic initiatives.

The mid-term review is occurring in an international context characterized by the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which presents Africa with both new opportunities and new challenges. The review should provide an opportunity for Africa and the international community not only to reaffirm their commitments of five years ago but also to adopt the necessary measures to accelerate the implementation of this important political contract.

Among the needs worthy of sustained attention on the part of Africa and its partners is the creation of a peaceful environment both within and among States. Peace is indeed a prerequisite for development. Because of the political instability and destruction it engenders, the persistence of armed conflict, civil war and ethnic rivalries is damaging to development efforts. In this regard, the delegation of the Republic of Congo supports the recommendation in the Ad Hoc Committee's report that the international community should continue to

support subregional and regional initiatives to settle conflicts.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s notes that Africa's economic and social development is primarily the responsibility of Africans. In an international environment characterized by the exacerbation of commercial, financial and cultural competition, in which international aid is becoming scarcer, strengthening the endogenous capacities of Africa is a healthy imperative to allow our continent to take its destiny into its own hands. The acquisition and mastery of the key resources of science and technology are crucial in this regard. The international community must resolutely pursue its efforts to help African countries make decisive progress in these areas.

The risks of marginalization of African countries remain a reality in an international context marked by a tendency to create broad blocks or large free-trade zones. Regional or subregional integration, by enabling Africa fully to exploit the complementary nature of its immense wealth, is an essential condition for its development. It is also a decisive factor for the peace and stability of the continent. Micro-nationalism, rural exodus, movements of populations or population explosions, even ethnic tensions and civil wars, forcefully emphasize the necessity for dynamic regional and subregional cooperation. We therefore welcome all recommendations aimed at consolidating initiatives that have been taken in this direction by African countries.

Whatever the reforms undertaken or the sacrifices made by Africa, all the goals of the New Agenda cannot be quickly achieved without sustained and significant support from the international community.

Africa has demonstrated that it stands ready to fulfil its part of the contract. It would like the international community to continue to play its role vigorously, so that together, in solidarity, we can find lasting solutions to the expectations of thousands and thousands of human beings struggling with hunger, poverty and natural catastrophes on the continent. As the moralist tells us, it is somewhat shameful to be happy in the midst of certain sufferings.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): There is no doubt whatsoever that Africa has been a grossly neglected continent. Its neglect by the international community in one way or another spawned a string of negative elements which have caused the stagnation of the growth and development of the countries of Africa, individually and collectively. Yet, Africa is a continent blessed with a plethora of natural resources.

The full economic and social utilization of those resources for the benefit of the peoples, to uplift them and create and maintain a better way of life, has been retarded by the severe impact of external debt and, concomitantly, debt-servicing costs, declining levels of official development assistance, reduced financial flows for investment and for industrial, business and commercial development, increasing barriers to trade and impaired access to the markets of the developed countries of the world.

The situation which the African continent has faced and faces is not unique to Africa alone. It is a tragedy faced by other regions and countries of the world, including my own region, the South Pacific.

In the case of my own country, for example, official development assistance from traditional and regional donors has declined and conditions are being imposed on the reduced aid levels. Trade balances with regional metropolitan centres weigh heavily in their favour, and yet hindrances are placed in the way of our access to their markets. Capital inflows for industrial, business and commercial development have declined.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the positive developments which have taken place on the continent over the past five years under the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The mid-term review mentions that since the implementation of the New Agenda, political, economic, structural and institutional reforms have been implemented in many countries. Closer regional and subregional economic cooperation has been established. The continent has seen increased democratization and the assumption at the regional and subregional levels of the role and responsibilities of leadership in conflict prevention, management and resolution. A number of African countries are beginning to formulate and implement strategies and policies aimed at the eradication of poverty.

On the other hand, my delegation notes with great concern that after five years, much of the Agenda has yet to be accomplished. Also of great concern is whether all of it can be fully accomplished in the next five years. The mid-term review states that many of the critical social and economic problems which led to the adoption of the New Agenda still exist and, in some countries,

have even worsened. Poverty and unemployment are expected to increase substantially. The estimated resource mobilization levels in the New Agenda are still far from being attained, and the key development goals have yet to be met.

The conclusion is obvious: the New Agenda has had a poor record of implementation. Accelerated progress in the implementation of the New Agenda over the next five years is clearly needed. My delegation joins in the call of the African countries to the international community, particularly the developed countries of the world, and to international organizations, to honour their commitments made under the Agenda.

It seems palpable to my delegation that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is intended to bridge the gap that exists in the implementation of the Agenda by coordinating the efforts between the international community, the Bretton Woods financial institutions and the United Nations on the issues of development.

We call upon the United Nations to exert every effort under the Initiative to ensure the full implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the coming five years. In the words of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the commitment to development must continue to be emphasized as the central objective of the work of the United Nations. The United Nations must reflect and embody the highest priority of most peoples and most nations; that priority today is development — sustainable, people-centred development.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): It is my great privilege to address the Assembly on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland on the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" (UN-NADAF). We commend the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for its comprehensive report on the status of the implementation of UN-NADAF, contained in document A/51/48.

With its unique approach, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was aimed at renewing the commitment of African countries and the international community to an agenda for the sustainable social and economic development of Africa in a spirit of global partnership based on shared responsibilities. The New Agenda sets out key targets to be achieved by the year 2001, and specifies a number of responsibilities and commitments for their achievement, to be discharged in a spirit of partnership between Africa and the international community. In this regard, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly has afforded us the opportunity to evaluate how much has actually been achieved to date.

Stark facts in the report reveal the distance both partners have to travel towards meeting the desired results by the year 2001. The mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda took place against the background of fundamental developments in international economic relations. While globalization and liberalization phenomena pose opportunities and challenges for the rest of the world, for Africa the fear of further marginalization, at least in the short term, is a reality. Coping with these challenges and living up to commitments in the various programmes of action is beyond our present means. Unfortunately, all this happens to coincide with an atmosphere of aid fatigue and severe budgetary pressures in the developed countries, with questions about the efficacy of international development cooperation, and with protectionist pressures seeking to undermine the theory of comparative advantage under the cloak of social and environmental causes.

African countries and the international community have taken a number of actions to achieve the objectives of UN-NADAF. The most remarkable efforts have come from African Governments which have undertaken major political and economic reforms. Democratization and good governance have been institutionalized in many African countries. The commitment of African Governments to political and economic reforms was further highlighted at the Seventeenth Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in March 1995, which adopted a declaration on relaunching Africa's economic and social development: the Cairo Agenda for Action.

For its part, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland commissioned a National Economic Review in 1994-1995, in which the private sector and community-based civic societies were among the major participants. This exercise was designed to identify areas likely to generate economic growth. Alongside our National Economic Review Commission is the Constitutional Review Commission, which was set up in July 1996 to review the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Africa's responsibility and commitment in the implementation of the programmes of UN-NADAF also include regional economic cooperation and integration, the creation of a climate conducive to attracting foreign investment, adopting people-centred development, protecting the environment, pursuing strategies aimed at achieving food security and the eradication of poverty, disease and illiteracy in the continent.

The international community, for its part, committed itself to assisting Africa in the provision of adequate resource flows for development and investment, diversification of primary commodities, and support for regional economic integration.

However, it is clear today that we are already far behind schedule in the realization of our goal.

The impact of these actions on overall African long-term development has been very minimal.

If we agree that long-term, sustained growth and sustainable development depend on the private sector and on attracting foreign direct investment, then we must identify a true incentive for investment, since Africa, despite its conducive climate, is still unable to attract foreign direct investment.

For most countries, the downward trend of recession has been arrested. Some have experienced a modest economic recovery. The New Agenda had estimated that $30 billion in official development assistance would be needed in 1992, and that this sum would need to grow by 4 per cent annually in order to sustain a gross national product (GNP) growth rate of 6 per cent per annum for sub-Saharan African countries. To date, official development assistance has been insufficient to jump-start, let alone sustain, African economic growth.

We therefore appeal to the developed countries to fulfil, as soon as possible, their commitment to attain the accepted United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of gross national for official development assistance, as stated in paragraph 60 of the report.

Africa's debt problem undermines any effort to improve our economic growth. It requires concrete and urgent measures to bring the burden to a manageable level. It is our view that, unless bold and innovative measures are taken by the multilateral institutions to reduce the debt, the negative economic situation will persist.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland believes that, in order to achieve meaningful and positive results for Africa by the year 2001, the political will that led to the adoption of UN-NADAF must be backed by the necessary means, in implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The continent of Africa is facing an economic war. Let our partners overseas recall that, during the Second World War, they recruited its sons to fight a war in Europe. That was done in a clear spirit of partnership. Some of us could have been born earlier, but, due to the Second World War, our birth was delayed because our forefathers were fighting a war overseas. Now is the time for those countries we were assisting overseas to come to Africa and join in fighting the war that is facing the continent. Our war is simple, because it kills no men. Those who come to assist us will return home alive. We ask our partners to come and support us in order to fight and win the economic war that is besetting the continent of Africa.

Mr. Suamin (Indonesia): Let me begin by extending our appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan for the helpful remarks he made in presenting his report as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We fully agree with him that the development of Africa is one of the major challenges in this post-cold-war era and that the economic take-off of Africa would not only improve the standard of living of its people, but would also have a positive impact on the world economy as a whole.

On that basis, I believe that we should approach the implementation of UN-NADAF in the second half of this decade bearing in mind the recommendations adopted at the mid-term review. In this context, I should like to say that the efforts of the African countries in implementing the Agenda over the past few years are highly commendable and should inspire the international community to greatly enhance its support for promoting UN-NADAF.

Yet despite the untiring efforts of the African countries, the Agenda has fallen short of expectations. A great deal remains to be done by the international

community. Shortcomings still abound and must be vigorously addressed if the implementation process of the New Agenda is to be revitalized and reinvigorated.

Our task at this session of the Assembly is to forge an agreement that the recommendations of the mid-term review be integrated into the Agenda for implementation in the second half of the decade. Since the points and recommendations of the report have already been well covered by the various delegations, especially by the African countries themselves and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I will confine myself to a few issues that my delegation considers important.

We note that the mid-term review of the New Agenda last September recommended an increased focus and concerted action to further enhance the implementation of the Agenda. However, in the present context, the African countries are faced with a perilous situation in which, unless the international community effectively and concretely addresses several core and global development issues, the prospects for the future are likely to be quite dim, and expectations may very well come to naught.

Let me therefore briefly focus on some of the areas in which we firmly believe that the international community should critically enhance its support for African development.

First, the financial resources committed to in the Agenda have fallen far short of expectations. Given the unique difficulties of some African countries, including their lack of access to private development funds, it is imperative that new efforts be made so as to effectively reach the targets of the Agenda. Since, by default, official development assistance is the dominant source of financial support for Africa, the international community should seek to fulfil its commitment to attain the accepted United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), including the targets of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Investment in Africa should also be fostered by supporting such areas as venture capital initiatives, institution-building and human resource development. In addition, given the persistent stagnation and even decline of some countries, there is a strong case for increasing the concessionary components and level of development assistance to Africa.

Another area that persistently undermines development efforts in Africa and requires attention is the continuing excessive debt situation. Standing at $322 billion in 1995 and representing 38.3 per cent of export earnings in 1994, the external debt overhang represents a tremendous drain on resources that would otherwise have been available for development purposes through domestic savings and external financial flows for development. Both the Naples terms agreed by the Paris Club and the recent initiative by the international financial institutions servicing multilateral debt are definitely steps in the right direction. It is important, as called for in the Ad Hoc Committee's report, that these efforts be continued. Also critical is that we recognize that piecemeal approaches alone cannot effectively redress the issue. There is an urgent need to employ a comprehensive approach so that the necessary critical mass to enable the African countries to resume development on a sustained and sustainable basis can be reached. Without such a "once-and-for-all" strategy in place, the debt problem cannot be decisively resolved.

International trade, especially in the post-Uruguay Round era, is an exceptional instrument for generating external earnings and promoting development. At the same time, the rapid liberalization of international trade and the advent of the Uruguay Round have had a negative impact on many developing countries. Thus, as previously warned by the Secretary-General, African countries could stand to lose up to $3 billion in foreign earnings by the turn of the century. It is therefore of critical importance that the World Trade Organization (WTO) closely monitor this critical situation and seek ways to alleviate the problem. In this regard, we welcome the proposed consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the Trade and Development Board of a joint programme of WTO, the International Trade Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on technical assistance to selected least developed and other African countries.

Other areas that could also be given priority attention by the international community include support for the promotion of human resources capacities, for the diversification of African economies, especially those dependent on a single commodity or small number of commodities, and for Africa's own efforts in South-South cooperation. Such cooperation deserves the support of the international community through various means, including trilateral arrangements. We urge the developed countries to provide this backing. For our part in Indonesia, we are, as in the past, fully committed to the further strengthening of South-South cooperation. We are continuing to build upon our South-South cooperation programmes and projects, especially activities of a technical cooperation among developing countries

(TCDC) nature with African countries. These we plan to build on and strengthen in the future.

In conclusion, as we — the international community — embark on the second half of the decade, certain facts have become clear. There is still obviously a lot more to be done if the Agenda is to be successfully implemented. To achieve this, I believe that international support and partnership should be reinforced with concrete and specific steps. Indonesia is committed to fully supporting any means that promise to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda.

Mr. Hamdan (Lebanon)(*interpretation from Arabic*): The problems suffered by all the African countries, albeit in varying degrees, require increased attention from the international community. This is because of the close interrelationship and joint interests among members of the international community and the common destiny that binds us together once we recognize that we live in a global village in which geographic borders cannot protect others from the physical or mental effects of those problems. The problems in Africa adversely affect the world environment and bring the conscience of the world as a whole face to face with the worsening humanitarian tragedy of millions of people, because of wars and conflicts that have led, in addition to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, to the flow of millions of refugees as a result of the high levels of poverty, malnutrition and communicable diseases.

On the other hand, the prosperity of the countries of this continent and the achievement of sustainable development of the continent could undoubtedly contribute in a dynamic manner to the promotion of the world economy and increased global welfare. Africa is replete with vast resources and can turn from being a burden on the international community into an active partner that enhances the welfare of that community. We are convinced that investment in the resolution of Africa's problems is an investment in future profitability. It is true that the main responsibility for the resolution of these problems lies first with the countries of the African continent. However, the assistance of the international community remains essential and important to enable these countries to achieve these solutions.

Investment in human beings is still the best way of attaining sustainable development. The management of resources and the achievement of political, social and economic stability are dependent on decisions made by individual people. We cannot propose theoretical approaches to correct imbalances and solve existing problems, however scientific these approaches may be, unless we first ensure a human response. Africa has already moved a long way in this direction. However, it still needs more programmes directed towards human resources. This principle, of course, applies to all countries and regions of the world. Such a belief might well have led to the organization of the series of world conferences since the start of the present decade, all of which were directed towards human welfare.

We have had the privilege of working in Africa for some time, and last year we chaired a group of members of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, which visited several African countries to look closely at the cooperation programmes that it was undertaking there. We became fully convinced that inherited social problems are the most serious impediment to sustainable development in Africa. Combating these problems cannot be achieved only through various economic programmes. There must also be programmes directed at local communities to enhance their capacities and increase their integration in the development process. Modern technology provides an effective means of implementing these programmes, and such technology and appropriate support resources should be provided for Africa.

Focusing on the political and managerial aspects of systems for national action in Africa should not divert our attention from the various real obstacles impeding the achievement of the desired structural reforms. The experiences of others can act as useful examples, provided that we do not limit ourselves to considering only the outcomes, but examine all the various stages. Democracy, the need to defend human rights, the elimination of the manifestations of corruption and the adoption of the concept of national accountability all require a realization by the public that the issue is one of conviction, not coercion.

Achieving the desired progress in these reforms requires a realistic approach and a long-term effort, in addition to positive cooperation on the part of the international community. It is time for us to strive for another model of international relations, based on encouragement and incentive, not deterrence and intimidation. In addition, it is unfair to hold Africa alone responsible for the failure of development programmes so far to achieve the desired results. Africa's partners are also responsible for this failure. The deterioration in the price of primary commodities and the brutal exploitation by transnationals of the weak points in African countries,

especially by encouraging corruption, the lack of official development assistance from the donor community and the withholding of necessary technology, in addition to indebtedness, have all contributed to the failure of these programmes. The international community must reconsider its relationship with Africa from the perspective of joint responsibility, not of relief.

Lebanon expresses its solidarity with Africa not only because it is a developing country, but also because it is linked with many of the countries of that continent through living bonds that go back 130 years. Many Lebanese emigrants settled in African countries and were integrated into their social, human and economic fabric, becoming citizens. We cannot forget that those countries opened their doors to receive tens of thousands of our people during the period of Lebanon's plight from 1975 to 1991. We therefore believe that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the recommendations of the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s acquire special importance. We call strongly for a collective, positive response to the implementation of that Initiative, and for the implementation of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

In conclusion, we would also like to commend the contributions, assistance and cooperation programmes provided by the donor community, whether States, individuals, or regional and international organizations.

Mrs. Dengo (Costa Rica): I have the honour of addressing the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which was completed in September 1996. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Owada on his successful stewardship of the review process.

The Group of 77 and China welcome the outcome of the mid-term review transmitted to the General Assembly with the Secretary-General's note. In this context, we also take note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/50/885.

The complexity and seriousness of the African development problem demands understanding and solidarity. Indeed, the mid-term review of UN-NADAF confirms that, despite some positive changes that seem to have emerged over the last few years at both the economic and political levels, the dire straits in which the African continent finds itself has been exacerbated by several conflicts in some parts of the continent. For these reasons, the Group of 77 and China still firmly believe that Africa is a unique case that will test international cooperation for development for some time to come.

The majority of African countries have continued to undertake several measures in order to improve the performance of their economies with a view to paving the way for more sustained economic growth and sustainable development. These countries have embraced macroeconomic policy transformation and strengthened regional and subregional economic cooperation. They are actively promoting private investment and South-South cooperation as well as undertaking far-reaching political and social reforms such as the intensification of the democratization process and the participation of civil society in the development process. In spite of resource limitations, African countries are integrating the outcomes of the various United Nations conferences and summits into their national development plans and programmes.

It is imperative for the African countries to continue to obtain a significant amount of external support, especially in the form of official development assistance, in order to be able to create the national enabling environment and establish the necessary conditions to attract foreign investment and create a productive base that will allow them to participate and compete effectively in the international market place.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China is convinced that the urgent measures and recommendations agreed upon reflect a concrete attempt at a focused response that will enable some of the critical areas spelt out in UN-NADAF to be implemented by the year 2001. This is the minimum that the international community can do to support Africa's own efforts.

I wish to conclude by reiterating the solidarity of the Group of 77 and China and its firm commitment to the development of Africa and to the efforts aimed at accelerating the implementation of UN-NADAF. As developing countries, and in the spirit of South-South cooperation, we stand ready to extend our full support.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): South Africa actively participated in the recently concluded mid-term review of United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which from 16 to 20 September 1996 took stock of the implementation of

UN-NADAF over the last five years. We endorse the outcome of that review, especially the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

In this context, my delegation would like to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly, Ambassador Owada of Japan, for his tireless efforts in ensuring the successful outcome of the mid-term review. Not least, we would like also to thank the working groups' two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana and Ambassador Alex Reyn of Belgium, as well as the Rapporteur, Mr. Dušan Rovenský of the Czech Republic, for their work during the mid-term review.

My delegation believes that the General Assembly debate on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is a welcome opportunity to once again highlight the challenges facing the African continent and the role of the international community in helping the African countries confront these challenges. It is thus an occasion of great importance. In this context, my delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/51/228 and Add.1). We also associate ourselves fully with the draft resolution before this Assembly on the mid-term review of UN-NADAF.

The success of this mid-term review attests to the continuing commitment of the international community to Africa's development. This was underlined by the participation of many delegations and international and non-governmental organizations in the mid-term review. But in the final analysis, it was the seriousness and sense of purpose characteristic of the participation of all the African delegations that took part in the review that ensured that the outcome of the process indeed had relevance and meaning for the millions of Africans who continue to hope for a better tomorrow free of hunger, disease and illiteracy.

While it is not the intention of my delegation to repeat here the debate that took place during the review of UN-NADAF, we would like to draw the Assembly's attention to a few of the salient recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. We fully agree that the pursuit of democratization, the promotion of and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and administrative reform are essential to creating an enabling environment for the sustained and sustainable growth and development of Africa. We also fully agree with the idea that pursuing and deepening economic reforms and improving the physical and institutional infrastructure for the purpose of attracting further domestic and foreign direct investment are crucial. The importance of the complementary technical and financial support of the international community in this regard cannot be overemphasized.

We are heartened by the attention that has been given to the need for cooperation between Africa and the international community to enhance African development by creating favourable conditions for achieving stability in private capital flows and for preventing destabilization arising from swift movements of these flows. We agree with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee's report that development needs to be undergirded by a human development dimension, and that people are at the centre of the international community's concerns for sustainable development.

Our participation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) underlines the importance we attach to subregional economic integration, with the ultimate aim of full implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Our determination to pursue South-South cooperation is shown by the growing cooperation between SADC and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). It is the intention of our subregion to expand such South-South cooperation with other subregions in the developing world.

We would like to re-emphasize our strong belief that the greatest challenge before the international community with regard to Africa's development is to address the two-headed dragon of Africa's crushing external debt burden and the overreliance of its economies on raw commodities. Until these two challenges in particular are addressed, Africa's capacity to mobilize resources at the domestic level will continue to be stunted, and its reliance on fickle and declining official development assistance and inflows of external resources will be unavoidable.

In conclusion, these two areas are of primary importance to the aims and objectives of UN-NADAF and need to be addressed effectively by the international community in the remaining years of the New Agenda. We also underline the importance of implementing the recommendations as agreed during the mid-term review, and, to further the achievement of this objective, we emphasize the need for a proper follow-up, monitoring and evaluation mechanism to be put in place throughout

the United Nations system. In this regard, it is our considered view that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa has a great role to play as a complement to UN-NADAF. In the interim, we look forward to the successful implementation of UN-NADAF as well as to its appraisal and final review in 2002.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): My delegation has taken due note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee for the mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We note as well the distinguished leadership of this Committee by Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan and his able Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, Ambassador Reyn of Belgium, and Ambassador Réwaka of Gabon.

My delegation fully supports the draft resolution on the subject, and strongly recommends its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly as an expression of the international community's continued support for UN-NADAF. The outcome of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF reaffirms, among other things, the enduring compact between Africa and the international community to ensure the implementation of the New Agenda and the achievement of its goals and objectives within the established time-frame. The mid-term review confirmed that implementation of UN-NADAF during the second half of its implementation phase will require greater adherence to the commitments made, and greater and consistent provision of the requisite resources, making possible an enabling environment for successfully achieving its objectives and ensuring a more effectively coordinated and coherent approach to the implementation process.

According to the report on of the mid-term review, the estimated resource mobilization levels of the New Agenda are still far from being attained, and the key development goals are yet to be met, in particular the goal of achieving an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent for African countries.

The implementation of UN-NADAF has been the subject of ongoing consideration by the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, reinforcing the importance attached to the successful implementation of the New Agenda while acknowledging its strengths and weaknesses. One major factor militating against the successful implementation of UN-NADAF and impeding the accelerated economic recovery of Africa is the debt overhang, which continues to grow in volume in spite of debt reduction measures introduced since the beginning of UN-NADAF. It is therefore important to formulate new initiatives that would go beyond the Toronto terms, the enhanced Trinidad and Tobago initiative, the Naples terms, existing bilateral and multilateral debt relief programmes, and present market initiatives to restructure private debt.

The international community's implementation of debt-reduction initiatives adopted in the 1990s has not fully produced the desired positive results. These initiatives have failed to equal the magnitude and complexity of the external debt burden of Africa. We note that bilateral debt is constantly rising and has remained the major component of Africa's external debt. Yet the relief treatment so far introduced, apart from giving African countries temporary relief from their bilateral debt burden, has failed to provide adequate relief for all African States, irrespective of their categorization as middle-income, slightly indebted or heavily- indebted countries.

Secondly, this situation is compounded by the ever-growing arrears of debt servicing. The failure of Africa to meet its external debt obligations has eroded the confidence in African economies and has consequently made it difficult to attract new investment from sources other than multilateral institutions. In this connection, the debt situation remains dismally unchanged in spite of efforts by Africa and the international community to collectively find a suitable and acceptable debt relief initiative or strategy. Africa's external debt has continued to rise, and exceeded $310 billion in 1994. My colleague from Ghana was able to confirm that it is now up to $320 billion. Debt servicing has now reached an average of $28 billion, which exceeds by far the yearly target of $9 billion recommended by UN-NADAF.

One of the effects of the debt overhang that constitutes another factor militating against the sustained development and economic growth of African countries is the decline in foreign direct investment. Records indicate that while foreign direct investment has been growing appreciably in other regions of the world in the 1990s, it has failed to register significant growth in volume in Africa and, in the process, has also failed to introduce to the region the transfer of technology and human skills that accompany it.

During this decade, less than 2 per cent of foreign direct investment flows have been received in Africa, maintaining a level of flow of about $3 billion a year.

This low level of foreign direct investment in Africa, concentrated mostly in the petroleum and mining industries, implies a failure to meet the commitments and objectives identified under UN-NADAF. The decline in foreign direct investment flows has seriously affected Africa's capacity to market the value of its products, improve its technical expertise in the various sectors of the economy, and maintain the attractiveness of its investment potentials.

Africa's cumulative benefits from globalization and liberalization have been limited by the narrowness of Africa's participation in world trade and disadvantageous world market forces, contrary to the objectives of UN-NADAF, the Uruguay Round agreements and other concessionary rates provided by its development partners. Exports from Africa account for less than 3 per cent of the total volume of world trade as a result of tariffs and access restrictions, which, in spite of the commitments under UN-NADAF, have not been removed.

Africa has made remarkable efforts to achieve the goals of UN-NADAF in accordance with its various commitments and responsibilities. In this regard, we note that the democratization process in Africa has accelerated during the period, with greater attention paid to the accepted principles of governance, democracy, the rule of law and respect for and preservation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the same vein, African Governments are allocating more of their national budgets to building their social and economic infrastructures, in particular to strengthening the health, education, employment, environmental, communication and transport sectors. The gains from these investments remain slight, due mainly to limited resource allocations, as well as the presence of other factors militating against sustained development in these areas.

One factor associated with these obstacles is poverty. The incidence of poverty is widespread in Africa and has seriously affected Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable human development and economic growth and recovery. The failure to formulate an effective strategy for poverty eradication in Africa has added to the growing problem of poverty. The international community's commitment to poverty eradication, adopted in Copenhagen at the World Summit for Social Development, should, within the framework of UN-NADAF, ensure the provision of greater assistance and resources for the eradication of poverty in Africa, which today lags behind the other regions of the world in fighting and overcoming absolute poverty.

The implementation of UN-NADAF during the second half of the programme will require great effort on the part of Africa and the international community to overcome the obstacles and shortcomings identified; one must build on the successes of the UN-NADAF programme so far achieved. There is also a need for the partners to remain firm in their collective responsibilities and commitments so crucial to the overall successful implementation of UN-NADAF. The recently launched United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa is expected to be complementary to UN-NADAF, and to provide it with much needed stimulus to ensure its effective implementation.

The primary concern for the successful implementation of UN-NADAF remains the responsibility of Africa, which should, among other considerations, continue its efforts to successfully mobilize the required aggregate $82.5 billion. Facilitating the effective implementation of UN-NADAF in order to improve socio-economic conditions and living standards in African countries through economic growth should be the concern and commitment of the international community.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that in order to facilitate the conduct of the election of members to the International Law Commission, under agenda item 17 (a), on Monday, 11 November 1996, we shall proceed, in accordance with established practice, to seek a decision by the General Assembly on the matter of requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised, updated list of candidates reflecting all submissions received. It is the intent of the President of the General Assembly to consult the Assembly in this regard at our next plenary meeting, tomorrow morning, 5 November 1996.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.